CAPTURED BY THE NAVAJOS

CAPTAIN CHARLES A. CURTIS, U. S. A.

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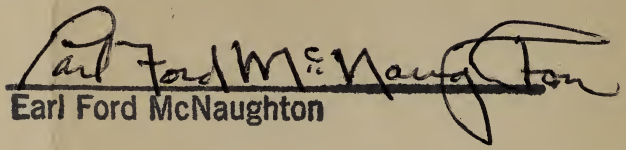

Earl Ford McNaughton

Bob Pearson

[See p. 282

"EVERY ONE HELD HIS RIFLE IN READINESS TO SHOOT THE ESCAPING APACHES"

CAPTURED BY THE NAVAJOS

BY

CAPTAIN CHARLES A. CURTIS
U.S.A.

ILLUSTRATED

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CAPTURED BY THE NAVAJOS

I

INTRODUCES THE BOYS

It was late in the fall of the second year of the civil war that I rejoined my company at Santa Fé, New Mexico, from detached service in the Army of the Potomac. The boom of the sunrise gun awoke me on the morning after my arrival, and I hastened to attend reveille roll-call. As I descended the steps of the officers' quarters the men of the four companies composing the garrison were forming into line before their barracks. Details from the guard, which had just fired the gun and hoisted the national colors, were returning to the guard-house, and the officers were hastening to their places.

At the conclusion of the ceremony I turned again towards my quarters, and noticed two

handsome boys, evidently aged about fifteen and thirteen, dressed in a modification of the infantry uniform of the army, and wearing corporals' chevrons. They stood near the regimental adjutant, and seemed to be reporting their presence to him.

At breakfast, the adjutant chancing to sit near me, I asked him who the youthful soldiers were.

"They are the sons of Lieutenant-Colonel Burton, Corporals Frank and Henry," he replied. "They hold honorary rank, and are attached to headquarters, acting as messengers and performing some light clerical work."

"How do they happen to be in Santa Fé?"

"Mother recently died in the East, and the colonel had them sent here in charge of a tutor who is to fit them for college, I believe."

Later, on the same day, being desirous of looking over this ancient Indian and Mexican town, I was making a pedestrian tour of its streets, and chanced to be opposite San Miguel School in the eastern section during the pupils' recess. Half a dozen boys were engaged in throwing the lasso over the posts of the enclosing

fence, when suddenly from a side street appeared the young corporals whom I had seen at reveille.

The Mexican boys instantly greeted them with derisive shouts and jeers. They called them little Gringos and other opprobrious names, and one young Mexican threw the loop of his lasso over the smaller corporal's head and jerked him off his feet. His companions laughed loudly. The older corporal instantly pulled out his knife and cut the rope. Then the two brothers stood shoulder to shoulder, facing the crowd, quite ready to defend themselves. The young Mexicans, gesticulating and shouting, crowded round the two brothers, and blows appeared imminent.

"Muchachos," suddenly cried a ringing voice from the rear, in Spanish, "are you not ashamed? A hundred against two!"

A handsome lad forced his way through the crowd, placed himself beside the two corporals, and faced his young countrymen. Before the Mexicans recovered from their surprise the bell of San Miguel summoned them to school. They hurried away, leaving the two corporals with the young Mexican who had come to their assistance.

"My name is Frank Burton," said the older

corporal, extending his hand to the Mexican, "and this is my brother, Henry."

The Mexican boy grasped the proffered hand, and said, "My name is Manuel Perea, of Algodones."

"We are the sons of the commanding officer at the fort. Can't you come and see us next holiday?"

"I should much like to; I will ask the fathers if I may."

"Come over, and we will try to make your visit pleasant."

"How well you speak Spanish! It will be a great pleasure to visit American boys who can speak my language, for I know but few English words."

"Next Saturday, then?"

"At ten o'clock, if the padres consent. Goodbye," and Manuel disappeared into the schoolroom.

The following Saturday I saw the two corporals and their newly acquired companion at the post and at dinner in the mess-room, and a friendship was then formed which was to continue for many years.

One evening, nearly a month afterwards, I received an order to march my company into the Jemez Mountains to co-operate with other detached commands in a war being carried on against the Navajo Indians. Just as I had laid aside the order after reading it, Colonel Burton entered, and, taking a seat by my fireside, announced that he had been ordered on detached service to northern Colorado, on a tour of inspection, which would require him to be absent for a considerable period, and that he had been thinking of allowing his sons to accompany me to my camp at Los Valles Grandes.

"The hunting and fishing are fine in those valleys, and Frank and Henry would enjoy life there very much," he said. "They have done so well in their studies that they deserve a well-earned recreation."

"I should much like to have their company, sir," I replied, "but would it not be exposing them to great danger from the Indians?"

"The officer whom you are to relieve has been in the valleys nearly a year, and he reports that he has not seen a Navajo in all that time. Of course, it may be your fortune to meet them,

but I do not think so. If you do, then the boys must give a good account of themselves. In any engagement that involves the whole command they must not forget they are the sons of a soldier. Still, I do not want them needlessly exposed. You are quite sure it will give you no trouble to take them?"

"Few things could afford me greater pleasure on such isolated duty, sir. They will be good company for me."

"Thank you for your kindness. The lads will report to you to-morrow morning. I will see that they are properly fitted out, and will write you now and then during my absence, and as soon as I return to Santa Fé they can be sent back."

Colonel Burton then took his departure, and I turned to a local history to learn from its pages something of the tribe with which I might be brought in contact.

The home of the Navajos lay between the Rio Grande del Norte on the east, the Rio Colorado on the west, the Rio San Juan on the north, and the Rio Colorado Chiquito on the south, but from time immemorial they had roamed a considerable distance beyond these borders.

They had always been known as a pastoral race, raising flocks and herds, and tilling the soil. They owned, at the time we began war upon them, sheep and ponies by the thousand, and raised large quantities of corn, wheat, beans, and other products.

They numbered between twelve and fifteen thousand, and could put three thousand mounted warriors in the field. They were industrious, the men doing all the hard work instead of putting it upon the women, as do the Indians of the plains and all of the marauding tribes. They manufactured their wearing apparel, and made their own weapons, such as bows, arrows, and lances. They wove beautiful blankets, often very costly, and knit woollen stockings, and dressed in greater comfort than did most other tribes. In addition to a somewhat brilliant costume, they wore numerous strings of fine coral, shells, and many ornaments of silver, and usually appeared in cool weather with a handsome blanket thrown over the shoulders.

The Navajos and the New Mexicans were almost continually at war. Expeditions were frequently fitted out in the border towns by the

class of New Mexicans who possessed no land or stock, for the sole purpose of capturing the flocks and herds of the Navajos. The Indians retaliated in kind, making raids upon the settlements and pasture lands, and driving off sheep, horses, and cattle to the mountains. Complaints were made by the property-holders, and war was declared against the Indians.

The military department of New Mexico was in fine condition to carry on a successful war. Besides our regiment of regular infantry, it had two regiments of California volunteer infantry and one regiment each of California and New Mexican cavalry.

The Navajo upon the war-path was terribly in earnest, and his methods of waging war were like those of the redman everywhere. With the knowledge that the American soldier was an ally of his old-time enemy, and that the Mexican was wearing the uniform of the "Great Father," he no longer hesitated to look upon us as his enemies also, and resolved to combat us up to the very walls of our posts.

No road in the Territory was safe to the traveller; no train dared move without an escort.

Towns were raided, and women and children carried into captivity. Frightful cases of mutilation and torture were constantly occurring in the mountain fastnesses. Troops took the field, and prosecuted with vigilance a war in which there was little glory and plenty of suffering and hard service.

Every band of Indians captured was taken to the Bosque Rodondo, on the Rio Pecos, where a large fort had been established. It was occupied by a strong garrison of infantry and cavalry.

I had found social life in Santa Fé very pleasant during my brief stay there, so I was not overjoyed when I received the order to march my company to Los Valles Grandes, there to relieve the California company already referred to. But the order being peremptory, we packed our baggage during the first hours of the night, and were on the road soon after daybreak.

It was the 3d of October when the boy corporals and myself, mounted on sturdy Mexican ponies, rode out of Fort Marcy for our new station, one hundred miles due west. The regimental band escorted the company through the plaza and for a mile on our way, playing, after

immemorial custom, "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and adding, I thought with a vein of irony, "Ain't Ye Glad You've Got Out th' Wilderness?"

On the morning of the 8th, after four days of gradual and constant ascent from the valley of the Rio Grande, which we had forded at San Ildefonso, we began the slower ascent of the most difficult portion of our march.

The woods were full of wild turkeys and mountain grouse, made fat on the pine-nuts, and Frank and Henry and the soldier huntsmen secured a generous supply for our first meal in our new military home.

It took us from early morning until noon of the last day's march to reach the highest point of the road. What with the frequent halts for the men to fasten a rope to the wagon-poles and aid the severely taxed mules up the steepest places, to fill gullies and sloughs with stones and brush, to pry mired wheels up to firm ground, and repair broken harnesses and wagons, we were over half a day in going a distance which could have been accomplished in two hours by soldiers unencumbered with a baggage and supply train.

The downward march on the western slope of the mountain-range was rapidly made over a smooth road through a continuous avenue of overarching forest trees, and without a halt. From the lower limit of the forest we caught the first glimpse of the Great Valleys. The valley before us was fourteen miles long, and of a nearly uniform width of eight miles. It was almost surrounded by mountains; in fact, while there were many trails leading out of it, there was but one practicable wagon-road—that by which we had entered. But at the southern extremity there was a precipitous cañon, through which flowed a considerable stream. To the west was another cañon, a dry one, called La Puerta—the doorway—which led into the second valley, called the Valley of San Antonio.

The Great Valley, on the eastern edge of which I had halted the company for a few moments' rest and observation, was lower through the centre than at the sides. It was not unlike an oblong platter, and was absolutely treeless, except that opposite us a bold, pine-clad point jutted out from the western mountain-range about three miles, like a headland into the sea.

The whole valley was verdant with thick grass. The two boys, sitting on their ponies a few yards in advance of the company line, were in raptures over the prospect.

"This is the first bit of country I've seen in New Mexico that looks like Vermont," said Frank.

"Yes, and what a change in the space of a few miles!" observed Henry. "On the opposite side of this range were only bunch-grass, cactus, and sand, and here we have fine turf and waving grass. What are those objects in that farther corner, sir?" he continued, turning to me and pointing to the southwest. "Look like deer or grazing cattle."

"There is a small herd of deer there, sure enough," I replied, after making out the objects through my glass. "We shall not want for venison if we have good luck with our rifles."

"Deer, antelope, turkeys, ducks, geese, sand-hill crane, and trout!" exclaimed Frank. "We've hit a hunter's paradise."

"And bears and catamounts, too, I suspect," said Henry, looking a little lugubrious.

"My, but wouldn't I like to kill a bear!" said Frank.

"Well, I don't believe I shall hunt for one, and I hope a bear won't hunt for me," said the younger lad. "I'll be satisfied with turkeys, grouse, ducks, and trout."

Six miles due west, a little south of the wooded point, detached from it about half a mile, we perceived a line of small cabins, which we inferred was the volunteer encampment. They stretched across a little level space, enclosed by a gently sloping ridge of horseshoe shape. The ridge, in fact, proved to be of that shape when we examined it later. The row of sixteen cabins stretched across the curve, and looked out of the opening towards the eastern side of the valley. Fifty yards in front of the cabins, running across the horseshoe from heel to heel, flowed a crystal stream of water twenty feet wide and two feet deep, which rose from forty-two springs near the northern end of the valley. The ridge enclosing the encampment was nowhere more than twenty-five feet above the level parade.

The cabins were built of pine logs laid up horizontally, flanked on the north by the kitchen and stable, and on the south by a storehouse. Behind the cabins, at the centre of the horseshoe

curve, two-thirds the way up the slope of the ridge, and overlooking the encampment from its rear, stood the guard-house, in front of which paced a sentinel.

Resuming our march, a brisk step soon brought us to the encampment. At the brook before the parade I was met by the volunteer officers, who did not disguise their joy at the prospect of leaving what they considered a life of unbearable exile. Even before the customary civilities were passed, the captain asked me if my animals were in a condition to warrant his loading the wagons with his company property as soon as I unloaded mine, as he wished to make an evening's march towards Santa Fé.

I told him I thought they were, provided he took the two wagons belonging to the camp in addition, so that the loads would be light. He approved of my suggestion, and promised to send back the wagons as soon as he reached Fort Marcy.

The wood-yard being well supplied with fuel, I saw no reason why the wagons and mules could not be spared the ten days necessary to make the round trip.

One reason for doing all I could to facilitate the immediate departure of the Californians was that my men were anxious to move into the cabins at once.

With my first glance at the encampment, it had seemed to me too open to surprise. The adjacent forest-clad point crept up near the left flank, offering an effectual screen to an attacking party, and the overlooking sentinel at the guard-house did not have a range of vision to the rear of more than fifty yards. He was not on the summit of the ridge by at least half that distance, and walked along the side of the guard-house next the cabins. He could see nothing of the surface of the valley to the west of the ridge, and when passing along the front of the building, as he paced backward and forward, he saw nothing to the rear of his beat.

I expressed my opinion of the situation to the volunteer captain, but he replied, "Pshaw! you might as well take the sentinel off, for all the good he does as a lookout for Indians."

"Have you seen none?"

"Not a solitary moccasin, except an occasional Pueblo, since I've been here—eleven months."

"I suppose you have scouted the country thoroughly?"

"There isn't a trail within thirty miles that I do not know. These bundles of wolf-skins and other pelts you see going into the wagons are pretty good evidence that my men know the country."

We walked to the kitchen, and found, hanging on the walls of the store-room, a dozen quarters of venison, the fat carcass of a bear, and several bunches of fowl.

"We are not obliged to kill our cattle to supply the men with meat," added the captain. "We butcher only when we need a change from wild meat."

"I saw from the edge of the valley where I entered it that you have deer."

"Pretty much everything but buffalo is here."

"I hear your brook is full of fish."

"There's where you make a mistake," he replied. "There is not a fish in this valley. The water is spring water, and must possess some mineral property distasteful to trout, for they never run up here. In San Antonio Valley, six

miles to the west, in a brook less clear than this, you can catch them by the cart-load."

"I suppose you intend to take this venison with you?"

"Not if you will accept the gift of all but a few quarters, which we will take for friends in the city."

"Thank you and your men. It will be a treat to us, and keep us going until we can put in a hunt on our own account."

We went back to the parade, and stood looking at the surrounding mountains in the deepening twilight.

"What other ways are there in and out of the valley, besides the one which we entered?" I asked.

"Well, on the east and south sides there is a trail between the peaks, four in all, and one good bridle-path to the Pueblo of Jemez. That descends from the valley level to the Jemez River bottom, a drop of nearly three thousand feet, in a distance of three miles, zigzagging twice that distance."

"And to the west and north?"

"To the north there is a trail to Abiquiu, rarely

used, and to the west there is only La Puerta, into which all the other trails from the east and south concentrate. It is to watch La Puerta that this camp was established."

"And you say you have seen no Navajos or signs of them since you came?"

"Yes, plenty of signs, but no Indians. Parties have passed here in the night, but none were driving stock."

I learned all I could of the captain while his men hurried their baggage into the wagons, but he was too much excited over the prospect of leaving the Great Valleys, as well as curious to know of events in Santa Fé, to give me much information. When the guard of regulars relieved the volunteer guard, I placed my sentinel on a beat a dozen yards in rear of the guard-house, which enabled him to see several hundred yards back of the ridge, and yet not show himself prominently to an approaching foe.

The volunteers at last marched away, and I made a casual examination of the cabins. I noticed that the inner surface of the log walls had been hewn smooth, and the names, company, and regiment of the former occupants had been

carved with knives or burned in with hot pokers along the upper courses. Each had a wide, open, stone fireplace and chimney set in one corner, after the Mexican fashion.

No uniform design had been observed in the construction of the cabins, the occupants having followed their own ideas of what would prove comfortable. Height, width, and depth were variable, but their fronts were in perfect alignment.

The hut which had been occupied by the officers and which fell to the boys and myself was at the right of the line, next the storehouse, a little removed from the others. It was twenty by twenty feet, partitioned on one side into two alcoves in which were rude bedsteads, one of which was assigned to the boys and one to myself. A door opened on the south side, and a window, the only glass one in camp, looked out upon the parade. Floors in all the cabins were of earth, raised a foot higher than the outside surface of the ground, smoothed with a trowel and carpeted with blankets, until later, when skins of wild animals took their place. Doors were made of puncheons, swung on wooden

hinges and fastened with wooden latches operated by latch-strings.

Our first day in camp was principally spent in making ourselves comfortable. The men were busy in filling bed-sacks from the hay-stacks, and in repairing the cabins and articles of furniture. Ten head of beef cattle had been turned over to me with the other property of the camp. I had placed them in charge of a soldier, with orders to herd them in the valley immediately in front of the opening, where they could be plainly seen from the parade as well as the guard-house.

At noon two Mexican hunters, father and son, rode up to my door, the former mounted on a mule and the latter on a burro, or donkey. The elder said their names were José and Manuel Cordova, of Cañoncito, that they were looking for deer, and would like permission to make the camp their place of rendezvous. I gave them permission to do so, and their animals were turned loose with our stock.

About four o'clock in the afternoon the boy corporals and myself, tired with our work of repairing and arranging quarters, sat down to a lunch of broiled grouse.

We were busily picking the last bones when we were startled by loud shouts. Quickly running to the centre of the parade, where the men were rapidly assembling with their arms, I saw the soldier-herdsman coming towards camp as fast as he could run, waving his hat and shouting. Behind him the steers were running in the opposite direction, driven by six Indians on foot. They were waking the echoes with their war-whoops.

II

ATTACKED BY NAVAJOS

THE six Navajos made no attempt to shoot the herder, although for some time he was within easy rifle range. They contented themselves with driving the cattle towards the southern section of the valley.

At the first alarm Sergeant Cunningham got the men into line without a moment's delay. He had hardly counted off when the report of the sentinel's rifle was heard, followed by his shouting, excitedly, "Indians! Indians! This way! This way!"

In the direction of the guard-house I saw the sentinel and guard getting into line with great rapidity. They were gesticulating wildly to us. Frank Burton, who was standing near me, shouted, "Henry, get your carbine and fall in with me on the left!"

"Don't expose yourselves, boys," I said.

"The colonel told me to keep you out of danger."

"We are needed, sir," answered Frank, promptly, and the two youngsters instantly placed themselves on the left of the line.

I broke the company to the rear through the intervals between the cabins. The men had only the marching allowance of ten rounds of ammunition, so I had a couple of boxes broken open with an axe, and cartridges were distributed to them. The two Mexicans joined us, and steadily and rapidly we advanced up the slope to unite with the guard.

Scarcely two hundred yards distant we saw a compact body of over three hundred Indians. They were charging down upon us, and with a general and frightful war-whoop they began firing.

We deployed as skirmishers. The men fired by volleys, sheltering themselves behind bowlders, logs, and ridges.

Instantly, at the head of the mounted column, there was an emptying of saddles. The onset was suddenly checked, and the Indians broke into two divisions. Part of the force swept along the

outer side of the horseshoe ridge to the south, and the other part wheeled round to the north.

I met the attack by dividing my men into two divisions. The men moved along the interior slopes, firing as they ran, and kept pace with the ponies running to the extremities.

The Navajos had lost twenty men. A chief, who had been in the front of the fight throughout, had the utmost difficulty in holding them in close column.

"That is the great chief, El Ebano," cried the elder Cordova, as he put his gun to his shoulder. Taking careful aim at the gray-haired leader, he fired, and one of the most famous chieftains of the Navajos rolled from his saddle. The beautiful black horse he had been riding ran on towards us. With El Ebano dead, the Indians were dismayed. A moment later they were in full retreat, and joined their comrades who had stolen our cattle.

Our casualties were few. Sergeant Cunningham's scalp had been grazed along the left side, Private Tom Clary had the lobe of an ear cut, Privates Hoey and Evans were wounded along

the ribs, and Corporal Frank Burton had a bullet wound in the right shoulder.

The Indians had gathered in a compact body about three miles to the southward, evidently holding a council of war. Reflecting that they would not be likely to repeat their attack immediately, I walked out with the first sergeant and a few of the men to note what casualties had befallen the enemy, and learn if there were any wounded men in need of assistance.

As I neared the place where the charge had been checked, I met Corporal Frank Burton leading a black pony, gently stroking his nose and talking soothingly to him, while the animal seemed half divided between fear and newly awakened confidence.

"Oh, isn't he a beauty, sir!" exclaimed the boy—"isn't he just a perfect beauty!"

"He certainly is a very handsome horse," I answered, after walking around him and taking in all his graces and points. "Take him to the stable and we will see to what use we can put him."

"Do you think it would be possible for me to

own him, sir?" inquired the boy, in an anxious voice.

"As spoil of war, corporal?"

"I suppose so, sir. I was first to capture him, you know."

Before I could reply to this we were startled by a loud whinny, a little to the north, which was promptly answered by the black, and, looking in that direction, we saw a cream-colored pony, with high-erected head, looking anxiously in the direction of our captive.

"That seems to be a friend of your pony's," I said.

"Another beauty, too, sir! Can't we catch it for Henry?"

"Perhaps we can. It seems inclined to stay by this one. I see all the other loose ponies have joined the Indians. But wait now until we look over the field."

We now turned our attention to the prostrate bodies of the fallen enemy. All were dead.

The body of El Ebano, clad in black buckskin, ornamented with a profusion of silver buttons, chains, and bracelets, lay face upward, his resolute, handsome countenance still in the em-

brace of death. I told the men we would give him and his comrades a warrior's burial on the morrow, and returned to camp to make it defensible against a possible night attack.

The advantage of numbers was decidedly on the side of the Indians, and I felt if they could show the firmness and dash of white men our chances of repelling a resolute attack were small. Counting the Mexicans and the boys, we numbered but forty-eight, to their three hundred or more.

We were in the centre of a large valley, with no knowledge of our surroundings nor with any way out except the road by which we had entered. Should we leave the protection of our ridge and cabins and take to the open valley we should be at the mercy of our foes.

Even supposing we could pass out of the valley unmolested, there were the forests and defiles, filled with natural ambuscades. We could not hope to pass them and reach the Rio Grande alive.

Only a few hours of daylight remained. Whatever was to be done in preparation for defence must be done at once.

In the wood-yard there were tiers of dry pine-logs, many of them four feet in diameter, and all about twenty feet long. With drag ropes and by rolling we conveyed them to the points of the ridge and to each end of the guard-house, and erected effective barricades.

While this work was going on the two boys were busy in an attempt to capture the cream-colored pony. Frank led the black towards it, while Henry rattled the contents of a measure of corn and coaxed the cream-color in a tongue foreign to that with which the animals were familiar to approach and partake of it. Tired at last of what seemed a vain attempt, the young corporal set the box before the black, which at once began to munch the crackling corn, and the other pony, attracted by the sound, trotted up and placed her nose beside her friend's. Instantly its bridle-rein was seized, and the lads uttered a shout of triumph and led the prizes to the stable.

From the top of the ridge I looked occasionally through my field-glass at the enemy. They still continued well to the south on the western side of the brook. They had dismounted and ap-

peared to be carrying on an animated consultation.

After a considerable interval of time, four of their number mounted, and, collecting the ten beeves, mule, and burro, which had been grazing near by, drove them up and down in front of the camp, beyond rifle range. They made gestures for us to come and take them—an invitation which, for obvious reasons, I declined to accept. I quite agreed with Private Tom Clary, who, as he placed his brawny shoulder to a big log to roll it up the slope, remarked to his "bunky," Private George Hoey, "That's an invitation, begorra, I don't fale loike acciptin'."

"Ye'd niver make yer t'ilet for anither assimbly if ye did, Tom. I don't think the lutinint will risk the comp'ny's hair in that way," replied Hoey.

To have attempted to recover our stock would have necessitated a division of our force, and the main body of the Navajos stood ready to dash in and cut off a party making such a reckless move.

This was what they had originally attempted to accomplish, as I heard years afterwards from a chief who took part in the raid.

Failing to draw us out in pursuit of our lost stock, the Navajos moved slowly away in the deepening dusk to a point close against the forest on the eastern side of the valley and nearly opposite our camp. There they built a row of five fires, which soon became, in the darkness, the only evidence of their presence.

I caused the sentinels to be increased, and, after dressing the wounds of the men and removing a bullet from Frank's shoulder, went to bed without undressing. After some half-hour of silence, Henry said:

"Mr. Duncan."

"Yes; what is it?"

"I'm going to name my pony Chiquita."

"And I'm going to name mine Sancho," added Frank.

"What are you going to do with the animals you brought here?" I asked.

"Turn them in in place of the two we captured," answered Henry.

"All right; for general utility. Good-night."

"Good-night. Thank you, sir."

Half an hour before midnight the sergeant of the guard aroused me to report that strange

noises could be heard from the rear of the camp.

I went to the top of the ridge and listened. A sound like the dragging of branches over the ground, with occasional pauses, fell upon my ears. I sent for the elder Cordova, and he listened long, with an ear close to the ground. His opinion was that the Indians were creeping up for another attack.

Orders were sent to Sergeant Cunningham to wake the men without noise and assemble them at the barricades.

A little after midnight the moon rose over the mountains and bathed the valley in a beautiful light.

As the moon cleared herself from the summits of the range and her rays fell upon the line of paling camp-fires of the Indians, my field-glass revealed the fact that the raiders had departed. Ponies and riders were gone. In the whole length and breadth of the Great Valley not a living being was in sight outside the limit of our encampment.

An inspection to the rear, to the scene of the late conflict, revealed the fact that the body of

El Ebano and the group of dead warriors which lay about him at nightfall had been taken away. Their removal had caused the rushing and creeping sounds we had heard.

Mounting my horse, and accompanied by four men upon the four ponies, I crossed the valley to the Indian fires, but found nothing there except the horns, hoofs, and entrails of our captured cattle. The flesh had probably been packed upon the Cordovas' mule and burro to ration a raiding party into the valley of the Rio Grande.

A well-defined trail went back through the forest, which Cordova afterwards assured me led to the town of Pina Blanca.

Returning to camp, I wrote a letter to the commanding general, giving an account of the attack and its repulse, and despatched it by the Mexicans, who, taking cut-offs with which they were acquainted, and borrowing horses in relays at ranches on the way, delivered it next evening at Santa Fé.

The general sent a hundred troopers to Los Valles Grandes, where they came galloping into camp two evenings afterwards. As Captain

Wardwell sprang from his saddle and wrung my hand, he exclaimed:

"God bless you, Duncan! I came out expecting to bury the bones of you and your men."

I was glad to see the California cavalry officers, and, during the three days of their stay in the valley for rest after a forced march, did the honors to the best of my ability. On the day of their departure the wagons returned loaded with supplies. Instructions were received to send back all but one wagon and six mules.

With the departure of cavalry and wagons, life in the valley settled down to quiet routine. I spent some time in instructing my companions, according to an agreement I had made with their father. Not being a West-Pointer, but a college graduate with a fair knowledge of Greek and Latin, and some other acquirements not considered of military utility, I was able to carry out a desire of the colonel and assist the boys in preparing themselves for college.

We rarely received visits from the outside world. The nearest hamlet was an Indian pueblo, twenty-six miles away, in the Rio Jemez Valley, and representatives of the army seldom had

occasion to visit our outposts. The mail arrived from Santa Fé every Saturday afternoon, and left every Monday morning in the saddle-bags of two cavalry express-men.

To the soldiers life in the valleys was very pleasant. Duty was light, and there were no temptations to dissipation or to be out of quarters at night, and there were no confinements to the guard-house for disorder. Evenings were spent over books and papers and quiet games, and the days in drill, repairing buildings, providing the fuel for winter, hunting, and scouting.

As previously referred to, we were in a region of abundant game. The boy corporals accompanied the hunting-parties, and became skilled in bringing down whatever they sighted. Henry, as well as Frank, shot his bear, and soon our floor was covered with the skins of wolves, coyotes, bears, and catamounts, skilfully dressed and tanned by the Cordovas.

And now I must introduce a principal character of my story, a valued friend who took a conspicuous part in our scouting and hunting, and who, later on, did valuable service to myself and my youthful comrades.

Just as I was about to leave Santa Fé for Los Valles Grandes, the regimental adjutant—since a distinguished brigadier-general in the war in the Philippines—gave me a beautiful young setter named Victoriana, and called Vic for convenience. She was of canine aristocracy, possessing a fine pedigree, white and liver-colored, with mottled nose and paws, and a tail like the plume of Henry of Navarre.

The boys, soon after our arrival in the valleys, carrying out a conceit suggested by the letters "U. S." which are always branded upon the left shoulder of all government horses and mules, marked with a weak solution of nitrate of silver upon Vic's white shoulder the same characters, and as long as she continued to live they were never allowed to grow dim.

Vic came to me with no education, but plenty of capacity, and the corporals and I spent much time during the long evenings and on the days when we did not accompany the scouting and hunting parties, in training her.

She learned to close the door if we simulated a shiver, to bring me my slippers when she saw me begin to remove my boots, to carry messages to

the first sergeant or the cook, to return to the camp from long distances and bring articles I sent for.

Vic was an unerring setter and a fine retriever. She was taught not to bark when a sound might bring an enemy upon us, and she would follow patiently at my heels or those of either of the boys when told to do so and never make a break to the right or left.

Our repeated scoutings soon made us acquainted with every trail in and out of the valley. I obtained permission from department headquarters to employ the elder Cordova as spy and guide, and he was of invaluable use to us. He was able to show me a mountain-trail into the valley of San Antonio besides the one through La Puerta, which I kept in reserve for any desperate emergency which might make it necessary to use another. We frequently went trout-fishing with an armed party, and could pack a mule with fish in a few hours.

One morning, near the close of October, Cordova left the camp before reveille on a solitary hunting-trip in order to reach Los Vallecitos, four miles to the south of our valley, before sunrise.

He had gone but half an hour, and I was dressing after first bugle-call for reveille, when I was startled by the rapid approach of some one running towards my door. Presently the guide tumbled into the cabin, gasping:

"Muchos Navajos, teniente, muchos Navajos!" (Many Navajos, lieutenant, many Navajos!)

"Where are they, and how many?" I asked.

"About half a league over the ridge," pointing to the south. "They chased me from the Los Vallecitos trail. They number about a hundred."

Without waiting for more definite information, I told the boys, who were hastily getting into their clothes, to stay in the cabin, and, going for Sergeant Cunningham, ordered him to parade the company under arms without delay; then, taking my glass, I went to the top of the ridge. Lying down before reaching the crest, I looked through the screening grass and saw a party of eighty-three Indians, halted and apparently in consultation. They were in full war costume, and were painted and feathered to the height of Indian skill.

III

WARLIKE PUEBLOS

THE party of Indians halted for nearly ten minutes, evidently in excited dispute, accompanying their talk with much gesticulation. I had time to notice that the details of dress were not like those of the Navajos with whom we had recently had a fight; but as the old hunter Cordova had pronounced them Navajos, I gave the matter little consideration. They did not seem to be aware of the existence of an encampment of soldiers in the valleys, and after a brief delay moved on towards La Puerta.

Returning to the parade, I ordered the six mules and four ponies brought to my door, saddled and bridled, and all the men not on guard to assemble under arms with cartridge-boxes filled. Fortunately, the mail-riders had arrived the previous evening from Santa Fé, so I ordered them to form a part of the expedition, and placed

the party of thirteen under command of Sergeant Cunningham, mounted upon my horse.

The sergeant was directed to take the "reserved trail" through the hills into the valley of San Antonio and bring his men into the western end of La Puerta before the Indians could pass through it. I impressed it upon him on no account to fire unless the redmen showed fight, to leave his mules and horses concealed in the timber at the entrance of the cañon, and so dispose his men as to convey the impression that thirteen was but a part of his force.

Just before the horsemen were to start I overheard Private Tom Clary, who was mounted on Frank's recent equine acquisition, Sancho, say to the boy:

"Corp'ril Frank, laddie, can ye give me the Naviho words for *whoa* and *get up?* I'm afeared the little baste 'll not understand me English, and may attimpt to lave for his troibe."

"You needn't speak to him, Tom. Use your reins, curb, and spurs," replied the boy.

"True for you, corp'ril; a pull to stop, and a spur to go ahead. That's a language that nades no interpreter."

For myself, I proposed to follow up the Navajos with the rest of the company as soon as they were fairly within the cañon, and I expected to capture them without bloodshed.

We started, the mounted men turning to the north of the wooded point and entering the forest, and the footmen marching direct for La Puerta. I kept my men out of sight under the rolls of the valley surface, and moved at quick time. When the redmen were well within the walls of the cañon we deployed right and left, and closed up rapidly behind them.

The Indians showed perceptible astonishment when they perceived this unexpected and warlike demonstration, but they soon recovered, and then, feeling the superiority of the mounted man over the footman, they broke into derisive shouts and made gestures conveying their contempt for us. This continued for some time, when they suddenly showed confusion. They dashed at a gallop to the north side of the passage, and skirted it for a considerable distance, as if looking for a place of escape. Failing to find one they dashed wildly to the other side, where they met with no

better success, and then they halted and consulted.

Presently one of their number rode out and waved a white cloth. Upon this I approached alone and made signs for them to dismount and lay down their arms. They did so, and at another sign withdrew in a body, when my men picked up everything and collected their ponies.

I was certainly surprised at such a bloodless result of my strategy, and, after shaking hands with the chief, began my return march to camp.

We had gone but a short distance when I overheard Private Clary, one of the mounted men, who was riding near me, say to Private Hoey beside him.

"D'ye moind the cut uv thim chaps' hair, Jarge?"

"Indade I do that, Tom," replied George.

"Thim's no Navihos!"

"Not a bit uv it. I'd as soon expict to see one in currls!"

I had a wholesome respect for the opinions of these old soldiers, for they had campaigned against Indians in Texas, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico long before I had seen a more savage

redman than the indolent, basket-making descendants of the Passamaquoddies and Penobscots. Accordingly, without appearing to notice their remarks, I approached the chief, and said, interrogatively:

"Apache?"

A shake of the head.

"Ute?"

Another shake.

"Navajo?"

"Si, señor!" he said, with a bow of his head, and I moved triumphantly on, satisfied that my eighty-three prisoners were Navajos.

But presently I heard Clary ask, "Jarge, did ye iver see Navihos with blankets like thim?"

"Niver!" answered Hoey, emphatically.

Evidently the two soldiers did not believe they were Navajos, and were "talking at me." But if not Navajos, Apaches, or Utes, who were these warriors?

When we were near camp we were met by Cordova, who had remained behind to recover from the fatigue of his early morning run. As soon as he came up to the Indians there seemed to be an immediate recognition. He and the chief met

and embraced, and conversed for a few moments in a language that was neither English nor Spanish. Then the hunter turned to me, looking shamefaced, and said, in Spanish, "Lieutenant, these Indians are Pueblos, of Santo Domingo."

Whoever knows the character of the Pueblos will appreciate the joke I had perpetrated upon myself. Many towns in New Mexico are inhabited by these Indians—towns which stood on their present sites when Coronado entered the country in 1541. They form an excellent part of the population, being temperate, frugal, and industrious. They dress in Indian style, and when at war paint and disfigure themselves like any other of the red peoples, so that a green soldier would see no difference between them and the wilder tribes.

The Pueblos explained that they were in pursuit of a band of Navajos who had stolen some of their cattle the previous night. When they first saw Cordova they attempted to approach him to inquire if he had seen any Navajo "signs."

My appearance and warlike demonstrations they could not account for, not knowing there was a camp of soldiers in the valley. When I

put the questions, Apache? Ute? Navajo? the chief thought I was asking him if he was in pursuit of a party of one of those tribes. Being in pursuit of Navajos, he answered yes to that name.

A week after my captives had returned to their homes in Santo Domingo, at the close of a long and fruitless search for their lost stock, a gentleman and his servant, mounted on broncos and leading a pack-mule, rode up to my cabin late in the afternoon. He introduced himself as a government Indian agent for the Navajos, and handed me a letter from the department commander. It stated that the bearer was on his way to the Indian pueblo of Jemez, to prevent the massacre of a number of Navajo women, children, and old men who had sought asylum there, and authorized me to furnish him with all the aid in my power.

After dismounting and entering my quarters, the agent stated that, the Navajo country being over-run by national troops, many of the principal men had sent their wives and children, with a few old men, to Jemez for safety; that the party of Dominicans which had been recently captured by us, being bitterly disappointed at their lack of

success in retaking their missing cattle, had determined to go to Jemez and wreak vengeance upon the enemy.

The Santo Dominicans had informed the people of Jemez that if they interfered to prevent the slaughter of the Navajos they would be considered by the military authorities as allies of that tribe, and treated accordingly.

Convinced, from what the agent told me, that I should act without unnecessary delay, I proposed that we should start for Jemez at once, but he declared himself too much fatigued by a long journey to undertake a night ride of twenty-six miles. My instructions from the general were to conform my movements to the wishes of the agent, so I very reluctantly and much against my convictions concluded to wait until morning. He strongly insisted there was no reason for haste, as the Dominicans had not planned to leave their pueblo before noon.

We set out, therefore, at four o'clock next morning. Sergeant Cunningham asked permission to accompany the expedition, and I allowed him to do so, leaving Sergeant Mulligan in charge until our return.

We were a party of thirteen, mounted on every available animal in camp. Henry was left behind, but Frank accompanied us, mounted on the recently captured Sancho, proud of his horse and proud to be included in the detachment.

We passed through an interesting country, filled with wind-carven pillars and minarets, eroded shelves and caverns, and lunched at noonday beside a dozen boiling sulphur springs. We also passed Cañoncito, the little village which was the home of José Cordova.

As we came in sight of the tinned spires of the church at Jemez, we heard a distinct murmur, and halted at once. In a moment the murmur swelled into an unmistakable Indian war-whoop. It was plainly evident the Dominicans had arrived before us.

As soon as I heard the war-whoop I told Sergeant Cunningham to bring up the men as rapidly as possible, sticking to the travelled road, and, accompanied by the agent and Corporal Frank, I put spurs to my horse and dashed towards the town.

Our route was through the cultivated land, while that of the soldiers was on the hard ground

along the foot-hills. Ours was in a direct line, over deep, soft earth, frequently crossed by irrigating ditches, while theirs, although nearly treble the distance, was over firm soil without a break. We struck directly for the church spires, which I knew rose from the central plaza.

Often we plunged down the banks of *acequias*, carrying avalanches of soil with us into two or three feet of water, to make a difficult scramble up the crumbling wall of the opposite side; and as we neared the pueblo, the louder grew the discordant yells of the Dominicans.

As I reached the border of the plantation I found between me and the road, which here entered the town, a cactus hedge about five feet high, with no passage through it except at a considerable distance to the right. The agent veered away to the opening, but Corporal Frank kept Sancho close behind me, and I gave my good thoroughbred his head and rode sharply at the hedge, cleared it at a bound, receiving but a few scratches from the cactus spines. Turning my head as I came into the road, I saw Frank come through like a trooper and join me.

Clear of the hedge, I found myself at the foot

of a narrow street which passed between two tall adobe buildings and entered the plaza near the centre of its western side. I took it at a run, and when half-way through saw directly before its inner end, facing the north, a group of old, gray-haired Navajos standing alone with their arms folded, and holding their blankets firmly about their breasts, while in their immediate front were some one hundred mounted Indians, painted and ornamented in true aboriginal warrior style.

On the terraced fronts of the houses and their flat roofs, and along the three sides of the square, seemed to be gathered the entire population of the town, looking passively on.

Before I had more than taken in the situation, a rattling discharge of rifles came from the direction of the Dominicans, and the old men fell in a heap to the ground. Covered with dust and mud, our horses reeking with foam, Corporal Frank and I burst through the crowd of spectators on the west side of the plaza, and gained the open space just as the firing-party was advancing with gleaming knives and wild yells to complete the tragedy by scalping the slain.

Raising my right hand I shouted, in Spanish, "Stop where you are!"

Frank had unslung his carbine and was holding it by the small of the stock in his right hand, the barrel resting in his left, looking calmly and resolutely at the hesitating Indians. The blood of three generations of soldierly ancestors was thrilling his veins with a resolution to act well in any emergency which might arise.

The Pueblos halted, and at the same moment a group of eighteen women and nearly three times as many children, some of them in arms, who had been reserved—as I afterwards learned—for later shooting, ran into the space and clung to my feet, stirrups, and the mane and tail of my horse, entreating with eyes and voices for protection.

The war-cries had ceased and the Dominicans had gathered in an angry and gesticulating group, when Sergeant Cunningham and the rest of the men appeared on foot, running into the plaza from a side street, and formed in line before us.

The massacre ended with the death of the old men. Aided by the agent and the Catholic priest

of the pueblo I succeeded in impressing upon the Jemez warriors that they must discountenance any further hostile demonstrations of the Santo Dominicans, and told the latter that unless they promptly withdrew and departed for their own reservation I should punish them for their recent conduct. They at once sullenly departed.

That evening, by the light of a brilliant moon, the dead Navajos were buried upon a hill-top overlooking the town, amid the wailing of their women and much ceremonious demonstration by the Jemez people, and Frank and I retired for the night to the house of the hospitable priest.

Early the following morning I held an inspection of the mules and horses, and finding the wheel and swing spans were much exhausted by the unaccustomed gait they had maintained in the forced march from the valleys, I determined to give them a day's rest before making the return trip. Finding Sergeant Cunningham's, Frank's, and my own horses none the worse for their exertions, I concluded that we three would return at once to camp. I placed Corporal Duffy in charge of the party, and told him after one day had passed to return by way of the hot springs.

Instead of returning by the route we came, the sergeant, Frank, and I were to take a shorter and rougher one pointed out to us by Padre Gutierrez. This trail was almost as straight as an arrow, but led through a section of the country over which we had not scouted. At half-past nine o'clock the three of us started, Vic bounding and barking at my horse's head.

IV

IN A NAVAJO TRAP

Six miles from Jemez our road, which, after leaving the cultivated valley of the Pueblos had narrowed to a path, entered the forest and ran along the side of a small brook, which it continued to follow for several miles, and then rose gradually to the side of a range of hills. We were walking our animals along the side of this acclivity, at a considerable distance above the brook on our left, their hoofs making no noise in the soft, black earth, when I was startled by the braying of an ass somewhere in the ravine.

Sergeant Cunningham and Corporal Frank threw themselves quickly from their saddles and held the horses by the bits to prevent them from responding to the greeting, and I quickly sought a place from which I could make an observation.

We were in a clump of evergreen trees which commanded a view of the ravine and obscured us

from sight in all directions. Looking across the ravine, I caught a glimpse of a party of Indians a little beyond the brook. Through my glass I made them out to be a party of twenty-seven Navajos, sitting about a camp-fire eating their dinner.

As many ponies were grazing near, and a mule and burro. From certain peculiar markings I had observed the day Cordova joined me in the valleys, I had no difficulty in recognizing the last two animals to be his property. Packs were lying near the fire, showing that the captured animals were being used as beasts of burden.

All this time I had entirely overlooked the presence of my dog Vic. Had I thought of her in season, it would have been easy to have kept her close at my heels; but I had left her free to wander, not thinking of any threatening danger.

Suddenly I heard a chorus of grunts from the Indians, and looking in their direction I saw Vic stand for an instant with her forefeet on a prostrate log, look questioningly at the savages, and then drop down into the furze and disappear.

The sight of a white man's dog, wearing a brilliant metallic collar, produced an electrical

effect. Instantly the redmen sprang to their feet, seized their arms, and began saddling and bridling their ponies.

"Vic has betrayed us, sergeant," I said. "We must get out of here as quickly as possible."

As we sprang into our saddles and regained the trail Vic came with a bound before us, and I immediately gave her positive orders to keep close at our heels. We rode as fast as it was possible to do without making a noise, hoping that we might get a considerable distance away before we were discovered. We had not proceeded far, however, when a yell announced that we were seen.

As we galloped on we saw that it was impossible for the Indians to cross to our side of the ravine. Every mile we passed the path rose higher and the sides of the stream grew more precipitous. The Indians were pursuing a path parallel to ours and about half a mile in our rear. What was the nature of the country ahead we did not know. The fact that they were pursuing, and with such eagerness, seemed to indicate they knew of some advantage to be gained farther on.

On and on we rode, I in advance, the sergeant next, and Frank behind. The trail wound through the trees and clumps of underbrush, with occasional openings through which we could catch glimpses of our eager pursuers. The prospect appeared exceedingly gloomy.

As we galloped on I noticed at last, through a rift in the wood a considerable distance in advance, an eminence or butte which lifted its summit nearly three hundred feet skyward, and which presented on the side towards us an almost perpendicular wall. When we approached it we saw a neat log-cabin nestling under its overarching brow. We dismounted, led our panting and utterly exhausted animals into the cabin, closed the doors, and went to the windows with our rifles.

The cabin was about thirty by twenty feet in area, and stood with its northern end close against the perpendicular wall of the butte, with an overhanging cliff a hundred feet above it. If a stone had been dropped from the sheltering cliff it would have fallen several feet away from the cabin's southern wall.

At the end of the cabin farthest from the

butte the ground upon which it stood broke off perpendicularly twenty feet downward, to a spring—the source of the brook we had been following since we left Jemez. The only way to cross from one trail to the other, except by going several miles down the brook or to the north end of the butte, was, therefore, through the cabin, and for this purpose a door had been placed in each side. The cabin could be approached only on the east and west sides, and was unassailable at its north and south ends.

Each wall contained a small window, except the one which rested against the butte, and there a wide, stone fireplace had been built. Three men with plenty of rations and ammunition could make a good defence. Water could be had by lowering a bucket or canteen from the southern window to the spring, twenty-four feet below its sill.

The Indians had discovered that we had found shelter from their pursuit and for the present were safe, and all but five, who soon afterwards appeared in the edge of the forest to the east, had joined the main party to the west of us. They showed great respect for our place of refuge and

rifles, and kept well out of range. The sergeant's and my Springfield rifle could throw a bullet farther and could be loaded more rapidly than any rifles in their possession, and Frank with his Spencer could fire about twenty balls to our one.

We removed the saddles and bridles from our animals, and, hitching them in the corners each side of the fireplace, began a discussion of our prospects.

"If we could keep a couple of fires going before the doors during the night, sir," said the sergeant, "we might keep them away."

"I am afraid a fire would be of greater advantage to them than to us," I replied; "we should have to expose ourselves every time we replenished it. I wonder if the roof is covered with earth? It is flat."

"I'll tell you in half a minute, sir," said Frank, and entering the fireplace he proceeded to ascend the wide-mouthed chimney by stepping on projecting stones of which it was built. In a moment he called down to me, "Yes, sir; it is covered with about two feet of earth."

"All right then. If we can get pine enough to

keep a blaze going then we will have one. A fire on the roof will illuminate everything about us and leave our windows and doorways in darkness. It will aid our aim and confuse the Indians."

We set to work at once and pulled down all the bunks, and with large stones from the fireplace succeeded in breaking into fragments the pine puncheons and posts of which they were made. Then Sergeant Cunningham ascended the chimney and tore away one side of the part which projected above the roof—the side looking in the direction opposite the precipice. This would enable one of us to stand in the top and replenish the fire, and at the same time remain concealed from the enemy. As we could be fired upon from only two directions, the fire tender would be safe.

Fortunately, Padre Gutierrez's housekeeper had put up a lunch sufficient to last us, including Vic, for three days, and water could be drawn easily through the southern window with a canteen and lariat.

"I'm afraid those chaps 'll get us in the end, sir," observed the sergeant. "Of course we can eat horse-meat for a while after our victuals are

gone, but we are three and they are twenty-seven—we are prisoners and they are free."

"Very true, sergeant," I replied, "but something may turn up in our favor. The Jemez party will reach camp day after to-morrow, and when it learns we are not there we shall be looked up."

"If another party of Navajos don't jump them, sir."

"Of course, the chances are against us, sergeant, but let us keep up our spirits and make a good fight."

"I'll do my best, sir, as I always have done, but this is a beastly hole to be caught in."

"But why don't you send Vic for help, Mr. Duncan?" asked Frank.

"Laddie, I believe you have saved us! Thank you for the suggestion. We'll put the little girl's education to a practical test."

"What! Going to send her to Jemez for the men?" asked Sergeant Cunningham.

"No; I hardly think I could make her understand our wishes in that direction, but there is no doubt she can be sent to camp. She has done that many times."

"Yes, sir, she'll go to the valley," said Frank. "You know I sent her with a message to you from San Antonio Valley, six miles. I wonder how far camp is from here?"

"'Bout nine miles," replied the sergeant; "but she'll do it, I think. Look at her!"

Vic had come forward, and sat looking intelligently from one to the other of us while this discussion ran on.

"All right, little girl," I said, patting and smoothing her silky coat, "you shall have a chance to help us after dusk. Go and lie down now."

The dog went to a corner and, lying down on Frank's saddle-blanket, appeared to sleep; and while Corporal Frank took my place at a window I wrote a message to Sergeant Mulligan at the camp, describing our desperate situation and requesting him to send a detachment to our rescue. I also prepared a flat, pine stick, and wrote upon it, in plain letters, "Examine her collar." I intended she should carry the stick in her mouth, as she had hitherto carried articles and messages, fearing she would not understand she was to go on an errand unless all the conditions of her education were observed.

During that day the Navajos simply showed their presence occasionally among the trees, far away on either flank. We once heard the rapid strokes of an axe, as of chopping, and wondered what it could mean. Nothing further happened till dusk. Then I called Vic and attached the note to her collar, wrapped in a piece of my handkerchief.

"I think, sergeant," I said, "we had better send our message before it gets darker and the Navajos close up nearer or the corporal lights his fire."

"Yes, she can't leave any too soon, sir, I think. It's going to be pokerish work for us before morning, and I shall be mighty glad to see a few of old Company F appear round that rock."

After fastening the note securely in the dog's collar, I placed the stick in her mouth and, opening the eastern door, said, "Now, little Vic, take that stick to the sergeant—go!"

She turned from the doorway, crossed the room, and dropped the stick at Sergeant Cunningham's feet. The sergeant stooped, and placing his hand under her chin raised her head upward and laid his bronze cheek affectionately

upon it. "Well, Vicky," he said, "there is but one sergeant in the world to you, and he is here, isn't he?"

"That's so, sir," exclaimed Corporal Frank, addressing me. "We never sent her to anybody but you, the sergeant, and the cook."

"True enough. I'll have to send her to the cook—the only one now in camp to whom she has borne messages. As he is the dispenser of fine bones and dainties, and she has had nothing to eat since morning, perhaps it is as well he is to receive this message. Here, Vic," placing the chip once more in her mouth, "take this stick to the cook—go!"

The setter looked at me an instant, then at the sergeant and corporal, walked to the door, looked out, and then glanced questioningly at me.

"Yes, little one; the cook—go!"

She bounded through the doorway and turned the corner of the butte at a run, bearing our summons to our comrades at Los Valles Grandes.

For some time after the departure of Vic the sergeant and I stood at our windows and gloomily watched the darkness deepen in the woods. Frank looked out of the window above the spring

and was also silent. I was disposed to put off the lighting of our fire upon the roof as long as it appeared safe to do so, in order to husband our fuel. The animals, disappointed of the forage usually furnished them at this hour, stamped impatiently and nosed disdainfully the stale straw and pine plumes which we had emptied from the bunks and which were now scattered over the floor.

It was during a momentary lull of this continuous noise that I heard a crushing sound as of a heavy wheel rolling over twigs and gravel, but was unable to guess its meaning.

Fearing that further delay to light our fire might bring disaster upon us, I told Corporal Frank to kindle it. He ascended the chimney, lighted a few splinters of pitch-pine and placed them upon the roof, and as soon as they were well lighted added to them half a dozen billets of wood which Sergeant Cunningham passed up to him. Soon a brilliant blaze was leaping upward, and, being reflected strongly by the white sandstone of the overhanging cliff, lighted the whole space about the cabin.

As soon as Frank descended to the floor we

gazed long and anxiously out of the windows. Everything about us was now plainly visible to our eyes, and we felt sure our movements could not be seen by the Navajos. To the east all was silent, and for a long while we saw nothing in that direction to suggest a lurking foe. To the west we could see no enemy, but the same mysterious sound of crushing and grinding came to our ears. What could it be, and what did it threaten? Adjusting my field-glass I looked from my window in the direction of the puzzling sound, and on the farther edge of the opening, near the wood, saw a log about three feet in diameter and twenty-five or more in length slowly rolling towards us, propelled by some unseen force.

Passing the glass to the sergeant, I said: "The Indians seem to be rolling a log in our direction. What do you think of it?"

"I think it's easy to understand, sir," replied the sergeant, after a long look. "That log is a movable breastwork, which can be rolled to our door."

"True, sergeant. Probably a dozen or more warriors are lying behind it and rolling it for-

ward. Rather a black prospect for us if we cannot stop it!"

We all three gathered at the western window, and for some moments watched the slow approach of the moving breastwork.

A SIEGE AND AN AMBUSCADE

We continued to watch long and anxiously the slowly rolling log. Not a glimpse of the motive power could be obtained, but it ground and crushed its way along with ominous certainty, straight in our direction.

Just as I had come to the conclusion that assistance could not arrive in time, the log stopped. I looked through my glass and saw the cause.

"Sergeant," I exclaimed, "the log has struck a rock! Open the door and draw a bead on it! Don't let a man leap over it to remove the stone! Corporal, guard the east window!"

The sergeant stood ready at the open door. All the efforts of the prostrate men behind the log had no effect, except to swing the end farthest from the obstacle slightly ahead.

"There seems to be nothing for them to do

but to remove the stone. Keep a sharp eye on the log, sergeant!"

I had hardly spoken when a sudden discharge of rifles ran irregularly along the length of the log, and under cover of the fire and smoke a stalwart warrior leaped over, raised the stone, and had borne it nearly to the top, when Sergeant Cunningham's rifle spoke sharply.

The stone dropped on our side; the Indian fell forward, with his arms extended towards his friends, who pulled him over the log, and he was screened from our sight. The volley of the Navajos did us no harm.

Corporal Frank replenished the fire on our roof from time to time, and our vigilant watch went on. At last the sergeant, who still stood at the open door, exclaimed, "Lieutenant, the stone is moving! It's dropping into the ground!"

"It's gone, and here comes our fate," I said. "They must have dug under the log with their knives and sunk the stone."

"Yes, sir, and they're safe to reach the cabin door and roast us out."

"If there were two or three more stones in the

way, sergeant, the delay they would cause might serve us until help comes."

"I'll run out there with one, Mr. Duncan," said Frank.

"No, laddie," replied the sergeant, "that's a duty for me. I'll drop a couple there in a minute."

"And when you return, sergeant, I will drop two more," said I.

We went quickly to work to carry out our plan. The corporal once more mended the fire, and then we selected from the loose rubbish which had been torn from the top of the chimney several large-sized stones.

Removing his shoes, the sergeant, with my assistance, raised two big stones to his breast, and stood in the doorway with them clasped firmly in his arms. I took the revolvers in my hands, whispered the word, and he started out at a rapid walk, setting his feet down carefully and without noise. He dropped the stones, one before the other, without attracting attention, and regained the cabin without a shot being fired on either side.

Now it was my turn, and I went beyond the place where he had dropped his last stone.

At that instant an alarm was shouted from the distant wood, and an Indian raised his head above the log and fired. The bullet struck the falling rock, and sent a shower of stinging splinters into my face. I turned and fled.

With the discharge of the Indian's rifle Sergeant Cunningham and Corporal Frank opened a rapid fusillade with the revolvers, which successfully covered my retreat to the cabin; but we knew that our last chance at stone-dropping was past.

Several terribly long hours had crept past since we saw Vic turn the butte on her errand to the valleys. Judging by the time it had taken the Navajos to bore a tunnel under their log and undermine the first trigging-stone, we estimated that two more hours must pass before the four obstructions we had placed in their way could be removed, unless they took some more speedy method.

It was quite nine miles to camp, and the dog could easily reach it in about an hour. If she had arrived, help should by this time be fairly on the way; but if she had been killed by the besiegers before she reached the north end of

the butte, or had been torn in pieces by the wolves!

Should the log once reach our door, we could not hope to do more than make the price of our lives dear to the enemy.

While the sergeant and I stood at the door and window, speculating in no very hopeful vein over these probabilities, there came a scratch at the eastern door. Frank was at the window on that side, and, startled by the sound, he called to us, "I'm afraid an Indian has sneaked up on us, sir."

Again the scratching was heard, this time accompanied by a familiar whine, which presently swelled into a low bark.

"Oh, Mr. Duncan, it's Vic! It's Vic!" shouted the boy, and, springing to the door, he flung it wide open.

In trotted Vic, and, coming up to me, she dropped a stick at my feet bearing the words: "In the collar, as before."

It took some little time for Corporal Frank to secure the messenger. She capered about the room, licked our hands and faces, jumped up to the noses of the ponies, and behaved as if she

was conscious of having performed a great feat and was overjoyed to have returned safely.

But Vic surrendered to the boy at last, and, submitting her neck for inspection, he found attached to her collar a letter which read as follows:

"Camp at Los Valles Grandes.
"*November 20, 1863.*

"Lieutenant,—Message received, and the messenger fed. Corporal Coffey and eight men leave here at 10.15 P.M.

"James Mulligan, *Sergeant.*"

"Come here, little doggie," said Sergeant Cunningham. "If we get out of this, the company shall pay for a silver collar and a medal of honor for the finest dog in the army."

"If that detail marches at the regulation gait of three miles an hour," I said, "it should be here by a quarter-past one, and it is now a quarter to twelve."

My anxiety over our prospects was so great I neglected to show proper gratitude to our devoted messenger.

"The men will do better than that, sir, if they keep on the road. The trouble will be in finding this trail. They have never been this way."

"I think the junction of this and the hot-springs trail cannot be far from here. Let's take a shot at that log every three minutes from now on, and the noise may attract our friends."

We began firing at once, aiming at the under side of the log where it touched the earth. I am confident this must have sent some sand and gravel into the eyes of the rollers, if it did no other damage.

Two of the trigging-stones we had dropped were soon undermined and sunk, and the log had stopped at the third, less than a hundred yards away. As it came on, the sergeant climbed to the top of the chimney, and shortly afterwards returned with the report that he had seen the prostrate body of a warrior revealed beyond—good evidence that his first shot had been fatal. If the next two stones should be as rapidly removed as the others, we feared the Indians would reach us, unless the rescuing party prevented, at about half-past twelve.

Marked by our periodical shots at the log, the time hurried all too rapidly on, the Indians slowly and surely approaching the cabin.

The third stone disappeared, and the log

moved with a louder grating over the gravelly soil to the fourth and last obstacle, about thirty yards away, and paused.

"I believe, lieutenant," said Cunningham, "I could hit those fellows' legs now from the chimney."

"All right, sergeant. Close your door and go up and try it," I replied. "A redskin with a broken leg can do us as little injury as one with a broken head."

The words were hardly spoken and the sergeant had barely reached the fireplace, when, as if in anticipation of this movement, two figures leaped over the end of the log nearest the perpendicular rock, ran to the corner formed by the cabin and the wall, and by the aid of the dovetailed ends of the logs clambered quickly to the roof. I sent a shot at them, but it had no effect.

No sooner had they reached the roof than they threw the flaming brands and coal of our bonfire down the chimney, where they broke into fragments and rolled over the floor, setting fire to the scattered straw and plumes.

Busy putting stops into the windows, and fastening them and the doors, we could do nothing

to extinguish the fire before it got well under way.

A blanket was thrown over the top of the chimney to prevent a draught, and soon the whole interior was thick with stifling smoke.

The horses plunged frantically, sending the fire in every direction. Our eyes began to smart painfully, and we felt ourselves suffocating and choking in the thick and poisonous atmosphere.

To remain in the house was to be burned alive; to leave it was to perish, perhaps, in a still more horrible way. Just as I was on the brink of despair, the sergeant gasped rather than spoke:

"They are here, lieutenant. Hark! Hark!"

Ping! Ping! We heard the sound of rifle-shots, accompanied by a good, honest, Anglo-Saxon cheer. Was there ever sweeter music?

The war-whoops ceased, the blanket was quickly withdrawn from the chimney-top, and two thuds on the east side of the cabin showed the Indians had left the roof. A general scurrying of feet and other thuds down the perpendicular wall back of the spring were evidence that the besiegers were in full and demoralized flight.

We threw the doors open, and our friends

rushed in, and before a greeting was uttered feet and butts of rifles were sweeping brands and straw into the fireplace, and the roaring draught was fast clearing the air.

Before I had fairly recovered my sight, and while still engaged in wiping away the tears the smoke had excited to copious flow, I heard a sobbing voice near me say:

"Oh, Franky, brother, if it had not been for dear little Vicky what would have happened to you?"

Blinking my eyes open, I saw the boy corporals with their right arms about each other's neck, holding their Spencers by the muzzles in their left hands.

"Why, Henry," I said, "you did not make that march with the men?"

"Couldn't keep him back, sir," answered Corporal Coffey. "Said his place was with his brother. Made the march like a man, and fired the first shot when we turned the bluff."

We shook hands all round, and then went out to see whether the volleys of the rescuing party had inflicted any punishment upon the Navajos. Two dead Indians lay near the cabin, and farther

away the one that had fallen when attempting to remove the obstacle before the log. There were traces of others having been wounded.

A fire was promptly kindled outside the cabin, and we sat about it for a time to rest and enjoy a lunch. The horses had been somewhat singed about the legs, but were not disabled. An hour afterwards Sergeant Cunningham placed Corporal Henry on his pony, Chiquita, and we started for the valleys.

At daybreak the day after we left Jemez we reached camp, and on the evening of the same day the detachment we had left behind for a rest also arrived, without adventure on the march. Cordova and his son at once set out on the trail of the Navajos, whom we reported to be in possession of their animals, to ascertain why they were in our vicinity.

After four days' scouting the Mexicans returned with the information that they found the Indians had left their camp on the Jemez road after their defeat. They had struck straight through the hills for the Rio Grande, where they joined the main body, the same which had attacked us the day after our arrival in the valleys, and which

had recently made several successful raids on the flocks and herds near Peña Blanca and Galisteo.

It was the guide's opinion that the party which had besieged me in the cabin had been to the valleys to see what chance there was of running captured stock through there. Their report must have been favorable, for Cordova said a detachment of forty-seven Navajos was now encamped in Los Vallecitos, apparently intending to pass us the following night with a large number of cattle, horses, mules, and sheep.

I began at once to make preparations to retake the stolen stock and to capture the Navajos.

That the Navajos, if they were watching our movements, might not surmise we knew of their presence near us, I ordered the scouting party and huntsmen not to go out next morning, and all the men to keep within the limits of the parade.

The next evening I marched all the company, except the guard, including the boy corporals, by way of the reserved trail into the valley of St. Anthony, and entered La Puerta from the western end. This was done for fear some advance-

guard of the redmen might witness our movement if we went by the usual way, and because so large a party might leave a trail visible to the keenly observant enemy even by starlight, and there would be moonlight before we could cross the valley.

It was my intention to make an ambush in La Puerta. In the narrowest part of that cañon, where it was barely fifty yards wide, the walls rose perpendicularly on each side. A hundred yards east and west of this narrowest portion of the pass were good places of concealment. I placed Sergeant Cunningham and thirteen men at the western end, and took as many and the boys with me to the eastern.

The sergeant was instructed to keep his men perfectly quiet until the head of the herd had passed their place of concealment, and then, under cover of the noise made by the moving animals, to slip down into the cañon, and when the rear of the herd came up make a dash across the front of the Indians and begin firing, taking care not to hit us.

For myself, I intended to drop into the pass with my detachment when the Navajo rear had

passed, deploy, and bag the whole party and the booty.

It was a long and tiresome wait before the raiders appeared. The men had been told that they might sleep, and many of them had availed themselves of the permission.

The moon rose soon after ten o'clock, and made our surroundings plainly visible in the rarefied atmosphere peculiar to the arid region of the plains and Rockies. I sat on a bowlder and watched through the tedious hours until three o'clock, when Corporal Frank approached from the direction of the place where his brother was sleeping.

"What sound is that, Mr. Duncan?" he whispered.

I listened intently, and presently heard the distant bleating of sheep, and soon after the deeper low of an ox.

"The Indians must be approaching," I replied. "You may stir up the men. Be careful that no noise is made."

I continued to listen, and after a long time noticed a sound like the rushing of wind in a pine forest. It was the myriad feet of the coming

flocks and herds, hurrying along the grassy valley. The men began to assemble about me, all preserving perfect silence, listening for the approaching Indians.

Another half-hour passed, and over a roll in the surface of the valley, revealed against the sky, looking many times their actual size in the uncertain perspective, appeared two tall figures, whose nearer approach showed to be mounted Indians piloting the captured stock, which followed close behind.

"Corporal Henry," I said, "drop carefully down into the trail and skirt closely along the wall until you come to Sergeant Cunningham's position, and tell him the Indians are close by. Tell him also to allow the two Indians in advance to pass unmolested."

I sent this order by the younger boy because I suspected he was feeling that Corporal Frank's expedition to Jemez, with the adventures of the return trip, had given him a certain prominence to be envied. I meant Henry should divide honors with his brother hereafter.

The little corporal silently disappeared beneath the wall, and a few minutes afterwards the

two Indians entered the defile, and the goats and sheep, which had been spread widely over the open valley, scampered, crowded, and overleaped one another as they closed into the narrow way. There seemed to be fully two thousand of them, intermingled with a motley herd of horses, mules, asses, and kine of all sizes and descriptions, numbering three hundred or more, all driven by a party of seventy-three Indians.

The cattle-thieves were evidently congratulating themselves upon having run the gantlet of the military camp and being out of danger, for they had abandoned the traditional reserve of the Indian race, and were talking loudly and hilariously as they passed my wing of the ambuscade. The Indians fell completely into the trap, and they and the cattle with them were captured without any difficulty.

During the winter our supply of grain ran short, and I sent a party, with the Cordovas as guides, to Jemez. They were unable to get through the snow, and the elder Cordova was so badly frost-bitten that in spite of all we could do he died in the camp.

Then I went with a larger party, and was suc-

cessful. On June 1st orders came to break up the camp, and on the 9th the accumulated stores of nineteen months' occupation were packed, and with a train of ten wagons we set out for Santa Fé.

VI

CROSSING THE RIVER

Two days after my arrival at the Territorial capital I was ordered to proceed alone to Los Pinos, a town two hundred miles south, in the valley of the Rio Grande, and report to Captain Bayard, commanding officer of a column preparing for a march to Arizona.

On reaching Algodones, on the eastern bank of the great river, I was visited by a Catholic priest. He told me that Manuel Perea, the Mexican lad with whom the boy corporals were so friendly at Santa Fé, was a prisoner in the hands of Elarnagan, a chief of the Navajos. He begged me to assist in his release, and I promised to do all I could, consistently with my military duty. Two days after arriving at Los Pinos, where I found a troop of California volunteer cavalry and also another troop of New Mexican volunteers, the boy corporals unexpectedly arrived. Colonel

Burton had changed his plans and had allowed them to accompany me. They at once asked to be assigned to duty, and I promised to consult with Captain Bayard.

My interview with him concluded, I returned to my tent and found the boys busy in fitting up two cot bedsteads, spreading mats before them, hanging a small mirror to the rear tent-pole, and arranging their marching outfit as they proposed to set it up at every encampment between the Rio Grande and Prescott.

"Did you have this tent pitched for our use, sir?" asked Henry.

"I did not know you were coming, corporal, so that is impossible. Your tent was placed here some days ago by the post commander, for the accommodation of visiting officers who have since gone. Captain Bayard has assigned it to you."

"Then we are to have the tent to ourselves?"

"Yes."

"Isn't that just jolly, Frank?"

"Fine. To-morrow we'll place a short rail across the back for our saddles and saddle-blankets, two pegs in the tent-pole for bridles, and

raise a box somewhere for curry-combs and brushes."

"Can't we have Vic here, too, sir?" asked Henry.

"And leave me all alone?" I replied.

"You wouldn't mind it, would you, sir?"

"Well, I'll leave it to Vic. You may make a bed for her, and we'll see which she will occupy—yours, or her old bed near mine."

"All right, sir; we'll try it to-night."

"Now something about yourselves, boys. Your tent is to be always pitched on the left of mine; you are to take your meals with the officers, and your ponies will be taken care of by one of the men who—"

"That will not do, sir," interrupted Frank. "Father has always required us to take care of our arms, clothing, and horses like other soldiers, just as we always did in the valleys, you know. He says an officer who rides on a march, particularly an infantry officer, should not require a soldier who has marched on foot to wait upon him."

"Very well; do as you choose."

I returned to my own tent and went to bed.

Placing two candles on a support near my pillow, I tucked the lower edge of the mosquito-bar under the edge of my mattress, and, settling back comfortably, proceeded to read the last instalment of news from "the States"—news which had been fifteen days on the way from the Missouri. As I read of battle, siege, and march I was conscious that the boys were having some difficulty in inducing Vic to remain with them. When at last all was quiet, except their regular and restful breathing, a soft nose was thrust up to my pillow, and I opened an aperture in the netting large enough to exchange affectionate greetings, and Vic cuddled down on her bed beside mine and went to sleep. This was always her custom thereafter. While she was very fond of the boys, and spent most of her waking hours with them, no persuasion or blandishments could prevent her, when she knew the boys had dropped into unconsciousness, from returning to my tent, offering me a good-night assurance of her unchanged affection, and going to sleep upon her old bed.

The time had now come for us to begin our march to Arizona. Company F had arrived, and

the boy corporals were again in possession of their beautiful horses. Grain, hay, and careful attendance had put new graces into the ponies' shapes, and kind treatment had developed in each a warm attachment for its young master.

The first day of our march was spent in crossing the Rio Grande del Norte and making camp four miles beyond the opposite landing. There was a ferry-boat at Los Pinos, operated by the soldiers of the post, capable of taking over four wagons at a time.

We rose at an earlier hour than usual, and by daybreak our train of eighty-nine wagons, drawn by five hundred and thirty-four mules, was on its way to the river. The two boy corporals joined me as I followed the last wagon. Mounted on their handsome animals, with carbines on their right hips, revolvers in their belts, portmanteaus behind their saddles, and saddle-pouches on each side, they were, indeed, very warlike in appearance.

The two detachments of cavalry and their officers, accompanied by a paymaster and a surgeon, proceeded at once to the river, crossed and went into camp, leaving the infantry and its of-

ficers to perform the labor of transferring, from one shore to the other, wagons and mules, a herd of three hundred beef cattle, and a flock of eight hundred sheep. The boy corporals also remained behind to act as messengers, should any be required.

Mules and oxen swam the stream, but the sheep were boated across. On the last trip over our attention was attracted by a sudden shouting up-stream, followed by a rapid discharge of fire-arms. In the river, less than a quarter of a mile distant, were several objects making their way towards the western shore. When near the bank, and in shoaling water, we saw the objects rise, until three Indians and three ponies stood revealed. As soon as they reached the shore the men sprang into their saddles and rode rapidly away.

A shout from our rear caused us to look towards the shore we had just left, and we saw the post-adjutant sitting on his horse on the embankment. He said: "Three Navajos have escaped from the guard. Send word to Captain Bayard to try to recapture them. If they get away they will rouse their people against you, and

"MOUNTED, THE BOYS PRESENTED A WARLIKE APPEARANCE"

your march through their country will be difficult."

I wrote a brief message, handed it to Corporal Frank, and when the boat touched the western landing he dashed off at full speed in the direction of camp.

The afternoon was well advanced when Henry and I, with the infantry, entered the first camp of our march. We found Frank awaiting our arrival, and learned from him that Captain Bayard had sent two detachments of cavalry in pursuit of the Indians, and that they had returned after a fruitless attempt to follow the trail.

On our first evening in camp many of the officers and civilians gathered in groups about the fires for protection against the mosquitos, to smoke, to discuss the route, and to relate incidents of other marches. Captain Bayard took from his baggage a violin, and, retiring a little apart, sawed desperately at a difficult and apparently unconquerable exercise. There I found him at the end of a tour of inspection of train and animals, and obtained his sanction to a plan for the employment of the boy corporals.

I proceeded to tell the boys what their duties

would be. Corporal Frank was to see to the providing of wood, water, and grass while we were on the march. He was further instructed that he was to conform his movements to mine, and act as my messenger between the train, the main body, and the rear guard. These were to be his regular duties, but he was to hold himself in readiness for other service, and be on the alert for any emergency.

The odometer with which to measure the distance to Prescott was placed in charge of Corporal Henry, and he was told to strap this to the spokes near the hub of the right hind wheel of the last wagon in the train, taking care that the wagon should start from the same point where it had turned from the main road into camp the previous day. He was to report the distance we had marched to the commanding officer at guard-mounting, which, on the march, always takes place in the evening instead of morning, as at posts and permanent camps. After reaching Fort Wingate, and taking up the march beyond, he would ride with the advance, and act as messenger of communication with the rear; but until then he would ride with his brother and me.

The next morning found all ready for a start at three o'clock. The boy corporals found it a hardship to be wakened out of a sound sleep to wash and dress by starlight and sit down to a breakfast-table lighted by dim lanterns. There was little conversation. All stood about the camp-fires in light overcoats or capes, for Western nights are always cool.

When the boys and I started to ride out of camp we were, for a few moments, on the flank of the infantry company. It was noticeable that although the men were marching at "route step," when they are not required to preserve silence, few of them spoke, and very rarely, and they moved quite slowly. Corporal Henry, at the end of a prolonged yawn, asked, "Are we going to start at this hour every morning, sir?"

"Yes, usually," I replied.

"How far do we go to-day, Frank?"

"Eighteen miles is the scheduled distance," answered Frank.

"How fast do men march?"

"Three miles an hour," said I.

"Then we shall be in camp by ten o'clock. I

don't see the sense of yanking a fellow out of bed in the night."

"Of course, Henry, there's a good reason for everything done in the army," observed Frank, with soldierly loyalty.

"Where's the sense of marching in the dark when the whole distance can be done in six hours, and the sun rises at five and sets at seven? I prefer daylight."

Evidently our youngest corporal had not had his sleep out, and was out of humor.

"Will you please explain, sir?" asked Frank.

"With pleasure," I answered. "It is more comfortable to march in the early morning, when it is cool. Marches rarely exceed fifteen or twenty miles a day, except where the distance between watering-places is more than that. Sometimes we are obliged to march forty miles a day."

"Seems to me the officers are very tender of the men," observed the sleepy Henry. "Fifteen and twenty miles a day, and five or six hours on the road, can't tire them much."

"Why not try a march on foot, Henry?" suggested his brother. "It might prove a useful experience."

"Let me suggest something better," said I. "Tie your pony to the back of that wagon, and crawl in on top of the bedding and have your nap out."

Henry disdained to reply, but with a long and shivering yawn relapsed into silence.

In a little more than six hours we reached the Rio Puerco, and forded its roily, brackish current to a camping-place on the other side. Harry, who with daylight and warmth had recovered his good-humor, examined the odometer and reported the distance travelled to be 18.65 miles. He entered in his note-book that the Spanish name Puerco meant, as a noun, hog, and as an adjective, dirty. He thought the river well named. He also mentioned that on the eastern side of the stream there was an excellent camping-place, but that much pains had been taken to ford it to a very poor one. After pondering this apparently unreasonable movement he asked: "Why did we not camp on that grassy park on the opposite side?"

"I suppose it appears to you there can be no good reason for crossing to this side?" I asked, in reply.

"It does seem even more absurd than starting on a march just after midnight—something like going into a wood-shed to rest on a wood-pile when one could as well go into a parlor and rest on a divan."

"And certainly," added Frank, "we have gained nothing in distance in crossing. The march is to be short to-morrow."

"Still, boys, there is quite as good a reason for doing this as for starting early to avoid the heat of the day. These Far Western streams have a trick of rising suddenly; very rarely, to be sure, but frequently enough to cause commanding officers to be on their guard. A rainfall fifty or seventy-five miles up-stream might send down a volume of water that would make it impassable for several hours or several days, according as the fall is large or small; so the rule in the army is, 'cross a stream before camping.'"

"Have you ever been caught by a rise, sir?"

"Twice. Once on this very stream, near its mouth. I was in command of a small escort to a train. The wagon-master advised me to cross, but I was tempted by a fine meadow on the lower side, in contrast to a rough place on the opposite

side, to take my chances. I was compelled to remain there five days. The other delay was on the Gallina; but that was rising when we approached and we had no choice about crossing. We were delayed that time but two days."

"I heard the paymaster and surgeon grumbling about the folly of crossing just now," said Frank.

"Very likely; this is their first march in the Far West."

"The captain and lieutenants heard them, but did not explain, as you have. Why was that?"

"There are two reasons. One is that in the army, as well as out of it, 'tenderfeet' are left to learn by experience; the other is that our surgeon resents being cautioned or advised. Now, boys, after dinner you had better take a *siesta*. By doing so you will find it less difficult to make an early start to-morrow morning."

"Thank you," replied Frank. "Tom Clary and George Hoey have told us that a nap is the correct thing after dinner on the march. Henry and I are going to try it."

"I am sorry, sir," added Henry, "that I was

so ill-humored this morning. I will try to do as the soldiers do when they first start out—say nothing till day breaks."

"The early start was a surprise to you; you will be prepared for it hereafter."

A reverberating peal of thunder interrupted our conversation and caused us to glance towards the west. There we saw a mass of dark clouds rolling down upon us. Bolt after bolt of lightning zigzagged across the sky and from sky to earth, and peal after peal of thunder crashed upon our ears.

VII

A SWOLLEN STREAM AND STOLEN PONY

It was our custom at all camps to park the supply-train in the form of an oval, with the tongues of the wagons outward and the wheels locked. An entrance, the width of a wagon, was left at one end.

When, therefore, it became certain that a tempest was about to break upon us, using the boy corporals as messengers, the chief wagon-master received orders from me to drive up the mules and corral them within the circle of wagons, and the commissary stock was hurried under the shelter of a rocky mesa west of the camp. All this was to prevent a stampede should the coming tempest be accompanied by wind and hail.

Tent-pins were driven in deeper, guys tightened, cavalry horses driven up, hobbled, and secured to picket ropes, loose articles thrown into

wagons, and every precaution taken to be in readiness for the storm.

We had not long to wait before the rain came down in torrents. In an incredibly short time the water was flowing swiftly down the slope to the river. It gathered against our tent, and finding the frail structure must go, we seized everything portable, dashed into the furious downpour, and climbed to the tops of surrounding bowlders.

Through the sheets of rain we could dimly see the cavalry horses standing knee-deep in water, men looking out of the covered wagons, into which they had crawled for shelter, or standing, like ourselves, on the bowlders, their bodies covered with ponchos and gum blankets. Wall-tents, the sides of which had been looped up when pitched, stood with the flood flowing through them; cranes, upon which hung lines of kettles in preparation for dinner, standing alone, their fires and firewood swept away. The whole country as far as we could see was one broad sheet of rushing water, and the river, which was little more than a rill when we crossed it a few hours before, now rolled and boomed, a

torrent several fathoms deep and dirtier than ever.

The storm continued little over half an hour, and with the return of sunlight the surface water rapidly disappeared. Demoralized tents were then set up, baggage and bedding examined, and the wet articles exposed to the sun; and before night, except for the booming of the river, little remained to remind us that we had been through a storm.

Just before retreat, Frank, Henry, and I stood on the bank of the river watching the trunks and branches of trees rush past, and the occasional plunge of a mass of earth undermined by the current.

"Well," said Frank, after silently contemplating the scene a few moments, "what you told us about crossing a stream before camping upon it has proved true, sir, and very quickly, too."

"Yes; I think even the paymaster and surgeon must be congratulating themselves they are on this side of that flood," I replied.

Next morning we resumed our march at the usual hour, and passed over 23.28 miles to a deserted Mexican town and Indian pueblo.

On the following day we crossed a chain of hills into the valley of the Rio Gallo. As we debouched from a deep ravine we caught sight of the pueblo of Laguna, illuminated by the sun, just rising, behind us. The town stands upon a rocky eminence overlooking the river, which waters, by irrigation, its large and well-cultivated valley.

When within four miles of it I proposed to the boys that we should hasten forward in advance of the wagons and visit the town. We galloped on, and were hospitably received by the Indian governor, who did the honors of the community in person. He showed us the interior of the terraced buildings, and conducted us through the subterranean *estufa* where, for centuries before the invention of the friction-match, the Indians kept their sacred fire—fire made sacred through the difficulty of obtaining it or rekindling it when once extinguished—and so watched day and night by sleepless sentinels.

When we entered the town we left our horses hitched to the willows on the bank of the irrigating ditch, near the wall of the first house, and I ordered the dog Vic to remain with them.

Three-quarters of an hour afterwards Vic looked into the *estufa* from above, gave three sharp barks, and dashed away.

We were so deeply interested in the examination of a lot of scalps, quaint pottery, weapons of warfare, etc., that we paid no attention to her. Presently she appeared a second time, repeated her barking, and ran off again. A few moments later the dog again showed herself at the skylight, and thrusting her head downward continued to bark until I approached the foot of the ladder. As I did so she uttered a sound of anxiety, or distress, and disappeared.

"Something must be the matter with our animals, boys," I remarked. "Frank, go and see what has happened, while Henry and I take leave of our host."

Corporal Frank climbed the ladder two rungs at a step, while Henry and I remained to thank the governor for his kindness and bestow some trifling gifts upon the rabble of children that had followed us closely throughout our visit. We then ascended the ladder and started for the place where we had left our animals.

Hurrying down the narrow alley we met Frank,

who was nearly breathless with exertion and excitement. While yet at a considerable distance from us he shouted:

"Chiquita's gone! Can't see her anywhere!"

Hastening to the willows I found that Henry's pony was indeed missing. I thought she had simply broken loose, and would be found somewhere in the neighborhood, so mounted and made a hasty search. I saw our train several miles away, toiling up a long ascent, but there was no sign of a riderless pony on the road. On my return to the willows Henry said:

"Chiquita did not break away, sir; her halter-strap was too strong, and I tied it with a cavalry hitch. She must have been unfastened by some one. Perhaps these Pueblos have stolen her."

"She may have been stolen, as you suggest," I replied, "but not by the Pueblos. We were their guests, and our property was sacred."

The Indians, seeing our trouble, gathered about us, and among them I saw the governor. Making my way to him, I explained what had happened. He turned to his people and addressed them in his own tongue. A young girl

approached and said something, at the same time pointing to the southwest.

Looking in the direction indicated, over a long stretch of broken country, bordered on the west by an irregular range of sandstone mesas, I thought I saw a moving object near the foot of a rugged bluff, several miles distant; but before I could adjust my field-glass the object had turned the bluff and disappeared. One thing, however, I did see—it was Vic, sitting on a knoll less than a mile from the pueblo.

"I wonder we have not thought of Vic's absence all this time," I said; "there she is, on the trail of the thief, wondering why we do not pursue."

"The good doggie," said Henry. "She did her best to tell us Chiquita was stolen, and she means to do her best to retake her."

Turning to the governor, I asked, "Are there any Navajos about here?"

"There is a large band in the *cienaga*, three leagues from here. The lost pony will be found there."

I directed Henry to run after the train and report what had happened. "Wave your hand-

kerchief," said I, "and some one will come to meet you. If it should be a mounted man, take his animal, overtake Captain Bayard, tell him all you know, and say that Frank and I have gone in pursuit, and that I request him to send a detachment of cavalry to look us up."

Henry started off with a celerity begotten of his anxiety at the loss of his pony and the fear that his brother might fall into danger unless a body of troopers followed him closely.

Frank and I then galloped towards Vic. As soon as the dog saw us approaching she sprang into the air, shook herself in an ecstasy of delight, then put her nose to the earth, and went steadily on in advance, threading her way through clumps of sage-brush and grease-wood and along the ravines.

The tracks of a shod pony satisfied us that we were on the trail of Chiquita and her Navajo rider. The boy had kept well down in the ravines and depressions, in order to screen himself from observation and possible pursuers. We, however, were not obliged to follow his tracks; Vic did that, and we took the general direction from her, cutting across turnings and windings,

and making much better progress than the thief could have done.

An hour's ride brought us to the bluff behind which I had seen an object disappear. Vic turned it and began to ascend the almost dry bed of the stream, in the bottom of which I could see occasional depressions at regular distances, as if made by a horse at a trot. Soon the brook enlarged, becoming a flowing stream, and the tracks were no longer visible.

That the brook flowed from the *cienaga*, or marsh, where the Navajos were rendezvoused, was an easy inference. The Indian boy was endeavoring to reach that place with the stolen pony. Directing Frank to keep up the left side of the stream, and to look for tracks indicating that Chiquita had left its bed, I took the right side and hastened on.

Willows now began to appear along the banks, showing that we had reached a permanent flow of water. Twice we came to masses of bowlders which made it impossible for a horse to travel in the stream, and we found that the pony had skirted them.

We had now reached a point where a small

brook entered the larger one from the right. We dismounted at the confluence to make an observation. Vic suddenly began to bark furiously; then a yelp and a continued cry of pain showed that the dog was hurt, and presently she appeared with an arrow through the thick of her neck.

Advancing cautiously I caught sight of Chiquita in a cleft of the rock at my left, and an Indian boy standing behind her and aiming an arrow over the saddle. A sharp twang, and the missile flew through my hair between my right ear and my hat-rim. The boy then sprang forward, and raised a knife as if to hamstring the pony. But it was not to be, for a carbine spoke, and the raised arm of the Indian fell at his side.

"Well done, Frank!" I called.

We ran forward to capture the young Navajo, but he quickly disappeared behind a large rock and was seen no more. Returning to the main brook with Chiquita, we tied the horses to the willows and began a search for Vic. I called her by all the pet names to which she was accustomed, but received no response. I searched over as great a distance as I dared, with a con-

sciousness that a band of Navajos was not far distant.

Reluctantly abandoning our search, we were preparing to return to the train and escort when we descried a large war-party of Indians riding towards us from the direction of the *cienaga*. It was at once evident they saw us, for, raising a terrific war-whoop, their irregular mass broke for us in a furious charge.

Death certainly awaited us if captured, and this thought prompted us to leave our exposed position instantly. Leading Chiquita, and telling Frank to follow, I dashed down the stream in the direction of the Fort Wingate road.

As we flew along, feeling positive that the Indians would overtake us, I eagerly surveyed the rocky wall on our left, hoping to find a break in which we could shelter ourselves and hold the enemy in check until our friends arrived. But no opening appeared, and it seemed impossible for us to reach Laguna alive.

On we went into the dense bushes, a hail of bullets and a rush of arrows about our ears. But at this moment the clear notes of a cavalry trumpet sounded "deploy," and the California cav-

alry crashed through the willows and we were saved. They broke into a skirmish-line behind us, but only a few shots were fired and the Navajos were gone.

Being an escort, we could not delay for further operations against the enemy. Our duty was to return at once to the train. Frank and I were both uninjured, but a bullet had raised the chevron on the boy's sleeve, and another had shattered the ivory hilt of his revolver.

The volunteers dismounted for a rest, and I took the opportunity to make a further search for Vic, my faithful companion and friend. Leaving my horse with Frank, I started towards the place where I had last seen her.

As I descended a shallow ravine to the willow-clad brook I came upon an unexpected sight, and paused to witness it. On his knees, close to the water, his back towards me, was Corporal Henry. Extended at his left side was Vic, held closely under his left arm, her plumy tail hanging dejectedly in my direction. An occasional dispirited wag showed that she appreciated the kindness being shown her. The boy was evidently busy at something that elicited from the

animal, every now and then, faint cries of pain. I heard something snap, and saw him lay two parts of an arrow on the ground to his right; then he drew a handkerchief from his pocket, dipped it in the brook, and apparently washed a wound.

All the time the boy could be heard addressing his patient in soothing tones, occasionally leaning his face against her head caressingly. "Poor little Vicky! Nice, brave doggie! There, there; I will not hurt you more than I can help. They can't shoot you again, girlie, for lots of your friends are here now. You shall ride back to the train on Chiquita with me. We'll own Chiquita together after this."

I felt a little delicacy about breaking in upon this scene and letting the boy know I had overheard all his fond talk to Vic, so withdrew into a clump of bushes and began calling the dog.

Henry promptly answered: "Here she is, sir. This way. She wants to come, but I think she had better not."

"Is she much hurt?" I asked, approaching them.

"Not dangerously, sir. This arrow passed

through the top of her neck. I notched it and broke it, so as not to be obliged to draw the barb or plume through the wound. She is weak from her long run and loss of blood. The wound might be bound up if her collar was off."

"I will remove it and not put it on again until the sore heals," I answered, and, taking a key from my pocket, I took off the collar and assisted in dressing the wound.

After petting Vic for a while, and using quite as much "baby talk" in doing so as Henry had in dressing the wound, I asked the boy how he came to return with the cavalry.

"I ran ahead, as you told me to, sir, and the wagon-master came to meet me. He lent me his mule, and I rode on to Captain Bayard and made my report. The captain sent Lieutenant Baldwin and his men, and lent me a spare horse to come along as guide."

"Have you seen Chiquita?"

"At a distance. Is she all right?"

"Yes, but very tired. Let us join the troop, for it is time we were on our way to the train."

Our return ride was at a walk. Henry turned

his cavalry horse over to a trooper to be led, and mounted Chiquita with Vic in his arms. Arrived in camp he took the dog to the surgeon for treatment, and in a few days she was as lively as ever.

VIII

OVER THE DIVIDE—A CORPORAL MISSING

Fort Wingate was reached in two more marches—six in all from the Rio Grande—and we went into camp for two days for rest and some needed repairs to wagons before undertaking the second and longer section of our military journey —a section upon which at that time no white man had set up a home.

Recalling my promise to the priest who had interviewed me in behalf of Señora Perea, I made inquiries of the Fort Wingate officers concerning her son. None of them had heard more than she already knew, but a scout claimed he had recently seen a Mexican boy herding ponies for the Navajo chief Elarnagan, thirty miles north of Zuñi.

The evening before resuming our march Captain Bayard informed me that there was an emigrant family camped half a mile to the west of

Fort Wingate, which had been awaiting our arrival in order to travel to Arizona under our protection. He told me to assign the family a place in the train.

I went to their camp, and found it located in a grove of cotton-woods a short distance out, on the Arizona trail. Mr. Arnold, the head of the family, never ceased his occupation while I was talking to him. He was constructing a camp-table and benches of some packing-boxes he had procured from the post trader. He was a tall, well-proportioned man, of dark complexion and regular features, with black, unkempt hair and restless brown eyes. He was clothed in a faded and stained butternut suit of flannel, consisting of a loose frock and baggy trousers, the legs of the trousers being tucked into the tops of road-worn boots. His hat was a battered and frayed broad-brimmed felt. Mrs. Arnold sat on a stool superintending the work, bowed forward, her elbows on her knees, holding a long-stemmed cob-pipe to her lips with her left hand, removing it at the end of each inspiration to emit the smoke, which curled slowly above her thin upper lip and thin, aquiline nose. She was a tall, angular, high-

shouldered, and flat-chested woman, dark from exposure to wind, sun, and rain, her hair brown in the neck, but many shades lighter on the crown of her head. Her eyes were of an expressionless gray. A brown calico of scant pattern clung in lank folds to her thin and bony figure.

The three daughters were younger and less faded types of their mother. Each was clad in a narrow-skirted calico dress, and each was stockingless and shoeless. Mother and daughters were dull, slow of speech, and ignorant.

After staying long enough to give the necessary instructions and exchange civilities with each member of the family in sight, I was riding slowly back to the roadway, intending to take a brisk canter to the fort, when Corporal Henry's voice called from a clump of cedars at the back of the Arnold family's wagons.

"Oh, Mr. Duncan, may I speak to you a moment?"

Turning my horse in the direction of the voice, I saw my young friend approaching, switching a handsome riding-whip in his hand.

"You haven't seen all the family, sir," he said.

"I have seen Mr. and Mrs. Arnold and those the mother said were all their children—the three barefooted girls."

"But there is one more girl, sir, a very pretty one, too—a niece. She's back of the wagons making friends with Vic and Chiquita. You must not go without seeing her."

I went back with Henry and saw a girl of about fourteen standing by Chiquita, holding her by the bridle-rein and smoothing her neck, while Vic nestled at her feet. She seemed very attractive at my first casual glance, impressing me favorably. A blonde, possessed of abundant flaxen tresses held in a band of blue ribbon, having a complexion which her recent journey had tanned and sprinkled with abundant freckles, but giving promise of rare beauty with added years and less exposure to sun and wind. Her clothing was fashionably made and well fitted, and her delicate feet were encased in neat boots and stockings.

"Miss Arnold," said Henry, "permit me to introduce our quartermaster, Lieutenant Duncan—and Mr. Duncan," continued the boy, "it gives me pleasure to present to you Miss Brenda Arnold."

The quality, modulation, and refinement of the voice in which the girl assured me of her pleasure in meeting me, confirmed my first impression.

"But how did you make the acquaintance of Corporal Henry Burton, Miss Arnold?" I asked.

"I was riding back from the fort, sir, where I had been to mail some letters, and my pony, Gypsy, lost a shoe and came near falling. The stumble caused me to drop a package, and Mr. Burton chanced to come up and restore it to me, and he also picked up Gypsy's shoe. He accompanied me to camp, and since we arrived has been giving me the history of Vic, Sancho, and Chiquita."

"And that, of course, included something of the history of their devoted attendants?"

"Yes, I have learned something of the gallant deeds of Corporals Frank and Henry Burton and Lieutenant Duncan at Los Valles Grandes and on the march here. When I meet Corporal Frank I shall know you all."

"He will present himself to-morrow, no doubt," I observed. "But about that pony's shoe; do you want it reset?"

"Yes, but who can do it?"

"At our next camp, to-morrow, our soldier-blacksmith shall set it."

"But I do not belong to government, sir."

"But part of this government belongs to you," replied Henry. "I'll lead Gypsy to the forge for you, and Private Sattler shall shoe her as he does Chiquita, and polish the shoes, too."

The Arnold family history, gathered incidentally on the march, and at a period later in my story, was briefly this: Brenda was the only daughter of Mr. Arnold's only brother, and had been reared in a large inland city of New York. Her father and mother had recently perished in a yachting accident, and the young girl had been sent to her paternal uncle in Colorado. There were relatives on the mother's side, but they were scattered, two brothers being in Europe at the time of the accident. Brenda had reached her Western uncle just as he was starting on one of his periodical moves—this time to Arizona.

The different social status of the families of the two brothers was unusual, but not impossible in our country. One of the brothers was ambitious, of steady habits, and possessed of a re-

ceptive mind; the other was idle, impatient of restraint, with a disinclination to protracted effort of any kind.

The distance to the first camp beyond Fort Wingate where we were sure to find water was twenty-two miles; and it being impossible for us to leave the post before three o'clock in the afternoon, we determined to make a dry camp five and a half miles out.

When Frank and Henry learned that the start was not to be an early one they rode out to the Arnold camp with the information, and the former was duly presented to Miss Brenda. Gypsy was brought into the fort and shod, and returned to her mistress in season for the march.

The evening was well advanced when we pitched our tents at the dry camp. Horses and mules were turned out to graze for the first time without water, and although in this mountain region the grass was abundant, they did not cease to whinny and bray their discontent throughout the night.

The sun dropped behind the mountain spurs, and we drew nearer and nearer the fires, adding a thicker garment as the twilight deepened into

night. Frank expressed the trend of thought by asking, "We now march into the heart of the Navajo country, do we not, sir?"

"Not precisely through the heart, but along its southern border."

"They'll try to make it lively for us, I suppose?"

"They will certainly watch us closely, and will take advantage of any carelessness on our part."

"Do you think there is any chance of our finding Manuel Perea?"

"Hardly; he is too far off our route. We cannot leave the train to look him up."

There was a suspicious choke in the voice of the little corporal when he said: "It is awful to think we are going so near the dear old boy and can do nothing for him. Only think of his poor mother!"

"I was told at the fort that she has offered five thousand dollars to the man who will bring Manuel to her," said Frank. "I wish I could bring him in for nothing."

"Brenda says she believes we shall find him somehow," Henry said. "I hope she is right,

for I saw his mother at Algodones and promised her to rescue him or become a prisoner with him."

"So she wrote me at Los Pinos," I replied. "Well, something may turn up to enable us to serve his mother. Let us go to bed."

Next morning we were again on the road by starlight. A march of sixteen miles brought us to Agua Fria—cold water. Less than a hundred yards west of the spring was a ridge which did not rise fifty feet above it, and that was the "backbone" of the continent. The water of Agua Fria flowed into the Atlantic; the springs on the other side of the ridge flowed into the Pacific.

The wagons of the Arnold family travelled between the rear-guard and the government wagons. They consisted of two large "prairie schooners," drawn by three pairs of oxen each, a lighter wagon, drawn by four horses, beside which four cows, two ponies, and four dogs were usually grouped. The father and eldest daughter drove the ox-teams, the mother the horse-team, and two daughters rode the ponies. Brenda's pony, Gypsy, was her own property,

purchased soon after she joined her uncle in Colorado. As my station and Frank's were with the rear-guard, or along the flanks of the train, Miss Brenda commonly rode with us after daylight. Henry, after leaving Fort Wingate, rode with the advance.

After supper at Agua Fria, Corporal Frank ordered all water-kegs to be filled, for the water at El Morro, or Inscription Rock, our next camping - place, was poor. The distance was seventeen and a half miles. The next march was to the junction of the Rio Pescado and Otter Creek, twenty-two miles, and the following to Arch Spring, nineteen miles. This way took us through the ancient town of Zuñi, an Indian community described by the Spanish priest, Father Marco de Niga, in 1559.

After leaving Zuñi, a march of thirty-two miles brought us late in the evening to a spring variously called by Mexicans, Indians, and Americans, Ojo Rodondo, Wah-nuk-ai-tin-ai-z, and Jacob's Well. It is a funnel-shaped hole in a level plain, six hundred feet in diameter at the top, and one hundred and sixty feet deep.

At the bottom of the hole is a pool of brackish,

green water, reached by a spiral track around the wall. Our cooks first procured a supply of water, and then the animals were driven down in detachments. They waded, swam, and rolled in the water until it was defiled for human use.

An hour after our arrival four Navajos appeared and were admitted to an interview with Captain Bayard, of whom they asked information concerning the terms offered their bands as an inducement to surrender and go upon the reservation. In reply to our questions they told us we would find plenty of water at Navajo Springs, seven miles from Jacob's Well, and that there had been a heavy rainfall at the west. As the Indians were preparing to leave, Corporal Henry came forward and asked Captain Bayard to inquire for Manuel Perea. The captain thanked the boy for the suggestion, and did so; and we learned that a Mexican boy, answering the description given, was assisting in herding the ponies of Elarnagan, north of the Twin Buttes, at the head of Carizo Creek.

"Carizo Creek," said Frank, reflectively, turning over his schedule of distances, "that is 19.05 miles from here."

"CORPORAL HENRY ASKED CAPTAIN BAYARD TO INQUIRE FOR MANUEL PEREA"

"Yes, and there are the Twin Buttes," said Henry, pointing to two prominent peaks to the northwest. "Can't we go there, sir? It cannot be more than thirty miles."

"I would not be justified in leaving the road except upon an extraordinary emergency," replied Captain Bayard.

"Don't you suppose, sir, that Elarnagan would give Manuel up for the large reward his mother offers?" asked Brenda Arnold, who stood by the side of the boy corporals, an interested listener to all that had been said.

The captain asked her question of the Indians, and one of them replied that the chief had refused large offers heretofore, and would doubtless continue to do so.

"Cannot you scare him by a threat?" asked Henry.

"I will try it, corporal," answered the captain. Then, turning to the Navajos, he continued: "Tell the chief, Elarnagan, that it is not the part of a brave warrior to cause grief and sorrow to women and children; tell him that the great chief at Santa Fé is fast bringing this war to a close, and that two-thirds of his people

are already on the reservation at Bosque Redondo; tell him that when he surrenders — which will not be long from now—if the boy Manuel is not brought in safe he will be severely punished."

"Thank you," said Henry.

The Indians left in a northerly direction.

At guard-mounting Captain Bayard announced that, owing to the recent fatiguing marches and the lack of good water, we would go no farther than Navajo Springs the following day, and that we would not break camp before eight o'clock.

This announcement was received with pleasure; for since leaving Agua Fria little water had been drunk, it being either muddy, stagnant, or alkaline. The water at Navajo Springs was said to be pure.

Ten o'clock next morning found us at the springs. They were fifteen in number, clustered in an area of less than an acre. Each was of the dimensions of a barrel set upon end in the ground, with a mere thread of water flowing from it—a thread which the fierce sun evaporated before it had flowed a rod from its source. It soon be-

came plain to every one that we could not long remain there.

The Indians had said there had been a heavy rainfall at the west. Five and one-twentieth miles over a rough, red, and verdureless country brought us to the Rio Puerco of the West. There was not a drop of water in it.

The commanding officer ordered me to take ten cavalrymen, with shovels, and go on to Carizo Creek, and, if I found no running water, to sink holes in a line across its bed. The boy corporals were allowed to go with me.

The distance to Carizo was seven miles, over a high, intervening ridge, and the creek, when we reached it, was in no respect different from the one we had just left. We opened a line of holes six feet deep, but found very little water.

Sending Corporal Henry back with a message to Captain Bayard, we pushed on to Lithodendron Creek, a distance of thirteen miles, and found about an acre of water, four inches deep, in the bed of the stream, under the shadow of a sandstone cliff. It was miserable stuff—thick, murky, and warm—but it was better than nothing; I sent a soldier back to the command,

and sat down with Frank under the cliff to wait.

The march had lengthened into thirty-two miles, over an exceedingly rough country, and it had been continuous, with no noonday rest, and under a broiling sun.

Frank and I sat a little apart from the soldiers, watching for the arrival of the approaching wagons.

Time dragged slowly on until after nine o'clock, when a faint "hee-haw" in the far distance gave us the first hint that the train was over the divide and that the unfailing scent of the mules had recognized the vicinity of water.

An hour more passed before Sergeant Cunningham and half a dozen privates of the infantry company marched down to the roily pool and stooped for a drink. The rest of the men were straggling the length of the train, which arrived in sections, heralded by the vigorous and continued braying of the mules.

No one felt inclined to pitch a tent, partly on account of extreme fatigue, but chiefly because the ground was rough and stony and cacti in endless variety strewed the surface, branching

and clustering about the petrified trunks of giant trees which gave the creek its name.

There was no grass in the vicinity, and no grain on the train. The animals when turned loose went to the pool and drank, and then wandered about the wagons calling for forage. Lowing of cattle, bleating of sheep, braying of mules, and whinnying of horses never ceased as the suffering animals wandered in search of food. There was no fuel for fires in the midst of this petrified forest of prostrate trees, so hard bread and raw bacon made our supper.

After a time I began to wonder why Vic had not come to greet me. She had accompanied Henry when he went back with my message, and I knew that if he had returned she would have looked me up immediately. I was about to search for her, when Frank appeared, and asked, "Have you seen my brother?"

"No," I replied, "nor have I seen Vic. They must be with the rear guard."

"No, sir; they are not there. I have just seen the sergeant of the guard."

"Have you visited the Arnolds?"

"Yes, sir; and Miss Brenda says they have not seen him since he came back from you."

"Is not Corporal Henry here?" asked Captain Bayard, who had approached and overheard a part of our conversation.

"No, sir," I answered. "I sent him to you at Carizo to say we had found no water."

"He reported to me," the captain replied, "and I sent him back at once with orders for you to proceed to Lithodendron, as you have done."

"He did not reach me. I came here because it seemed the only thing to do."

"Henry not here!" and the captain and all of us began moving towards the train. "Cause an immediate search to be made for him. Examine every wagon. He may have got into a wagon and fallen asleep."

It is needless to say, perhaps, that this search was participated in by nearly every individual in the command not too tired to stir. Henry was known to all, and had in many gentlemanly and kindly ways acquired the respect and affection of soldiers and civilian employés.

Every wagon was examined, although from

the first there was a general presentiment that it would be useless. In the wagon assigned to the use of the boy corporals and myself, Henry's carbine and revolver were found, but Frank said his brother had not worn them during the day.

The mule and cavalry herds were examined for the cream-colored pony, but that also was missing. Then the thought suggested itself that the lad might be wandering on the road we had just traversed; but an examination of the sergeant of the guard showed that to be impossible.

But one conclusion could be arrived at, and that was that Henry had been picked up by the Navajos when returning from the command to my detachment on the Carizo.

At the conclusion of the search the officers gathered near their wagons for a consultation. Frank remained apart, silent and miserable.

Captain Bayard said: "It is impossible for us to make an immediate pursuit with horses in such a condition as ours. To attempt a pursuit over the barren region about us would be to invite failure and disaster. If we had Mexican ponies, or Indian ponies like those of the boys,

we might start at once. The boy is probably a prisoner, and a delay of one or two days can make little difference to him."

"But can we go with any better prospect of success to-morrow or next day?" I asked.

"Yes, a march of sixteen miles and a half will bring us to the Colorado Chiquito—a stream flowing at all times with pure water; there, also, we shall find abundance of grass and a recently established cavalry camp. I received a letter from the department commander before I left Wingate, stating that Lieutenant Hubbell and forty New Mexican cavalry had been ordered there three weeks ago. We shall find an abundance of grain at the camp, and can put our animals in good condition for an expedition into Elarnagan's country in a few days. Now, gentlemen, let us get such rest as we can, and start at an early hour in the morning."

IX

THE RESCUING PARTY

At the close of the consultation I rejoined Corporal Frank, and we went back to our former seat under the cliff. The boy was exceedingly depressed, and I did my best to persuade him that all would end well and his brother would be rescued.

"But he may be dead, or dying," he answered to my arguments.

"No; that is improbable. Had he been killed, the Indians would have taken particular pains to mutilate and place his body where the passing column would have seen it. That in itself is good evidence that he is living. The worst that is likely to happen is that he may be held for ransom or exchange."

"But how *can* I wait?" exclaimed Frank. "I feel as though I ought to start now."

"That would do no good," I replied. "You

cannot find your brother's trail, nor could you follow it in the night."

"I cannot help thinking, sir, that Henry will send Vicky with a message, and I fear that she cannot follow us so far. She must be fearfully hungry and thirsty. I feel as if I ought to go and meet her."

"You may be right about the message. As Vic was without her collar, she may not have been killed."

The hours crept slowly on. The uneasy animals never ceased their walk backward and forward between the water and the wagons, uttering their discontent. Towards midnight, overcome by the fatigues of the day, I fell into a doze, and did not wake until called at three.

A breakfast similar to our supper was served, and we were ready for the road. The mules were harnessed while vigorously braying their protests against such ill usage, and, once under way, slowly drew the wagons to the summit of the divide between the Lithodendron and the Little Colorado, a distance of twelve miles.

I did not see Frank while overlooking the drawing out of the train, but gave myself no

anxiety on his account, thinking he had accompanied the advance. We had proceeded about a mile when a corporal of the guard ran after me, and reported that the Arnolds were not hitching up. Halting the train, I rode back and found Brenda sitting by the road-side in tears.

"What is the matter, Miss Arnold?" I asked.

"Oh, it is something this time," she sobbed, "that even you cannot remedy."

"Then you think I can generally remedy things? Thank you."

"You have always helped us, but I do not see how you can now."

"What is the trouble, please?"

"Our poor oxen have worn their hoofs through to the quick. They were obliged to travel very fast yesterday, and over a flinty road, and their hoofs are worn and bleeding. Uncle says we must remain behind."

"Perhaps things are not as bad as you think," I said. "Let us go back and see."

Rising dejectedly, and by no means inspired by hope, Brenda led the way to the Arnold wagons, where I found the father and mother on their knees beside an ox, engaged in binding

rawhide "boots" to the animal's feet. These boots were squares cut from a fresh hide procured from the last ox slaughtered by the soldier-butcher. The foot of the ox being set in the centre, the square was gathered about the ankle and fastened with a thong of buckskin.

"Are all of your cattle in this condition, Mr. Arnold?" I asked.

"Only one other's 's bad's this, but all uv 'em's bad."

"That certainly is a very bad-looking foot. I don't see how you kept up, with cattle in that condition."

"Had to, or git left."

"That's where you make a mistake. We could not leave you behind."

"I didn't think 'twould be uv any use t' say anythin'," said Mr. Arnold. "You seem t' have all you can haul now."

"We have over three hundred head of oxen in our commissary herd that we purchased of a freighter. We can exchange with you. A beef is a beef. Turn your cattle into our herd, and catch up a new lot. When we get to Prescott you can have your old teams if you want them."

"Thank you agin, sir. I shall want 'em. They know my ways an' I know theirs."

From the top of the divide the road, smooth and hard, descended to the river, ten miles away. At nine o'clock the head of the column had reached the banks, and a few moments later men and horses had partaken of the clear, cool water.

As the infantry and cavalry moved away from the shore the wagons came down the decline, the mules braying with excitement at the sight of the water gleaming through the green foliage of the cottonwoods and the verdant acres of rich grass that stretched along the river-side. Brakes were put on and wheels double-locked, until the harness could be stripped off and the half-frantic animals set free to take a turn in the river.

Sheep and oxen plunged down the banks and stood leg-deep in the current while they drank the grateful water. A few moments later all the refreshed animals were cropping the generous grass. As I was going to Captain Bayard I observed Brenda Arnold taking the odometer from its wheel and making an entry in a note-book.

Approaching her, I asked: "Why are you doing that, Miss Brenda?"

"I promised Mr. Frank I would do it until he and Mr. Henry return," was her answer.

"Promised Frank? Where has he gone?"

"Gone to find his brother."

"And you knew what you are telling me when we were exchanging oxen this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you not tell me?"

"Mr. Frank said I must not before we arrived here."

"Have you no idea of the fearful danger in which he has placed himself?"

"I know he has gone to find Henry, and that he said he should find him," and the pretty girl betrayed her lack of confidence in the boy's project by sitting down in the grass and bursting into tears.

"When did Corporal Frank start?" I asked.

"Last night. He gave Sancho about a dozen pounds of hard bread, filled his canteen with water which Aunt Martha had filtered through sand, and asked me to attend to the odometer,

and rode off in the darkness. Don't you really believe the boys will return, sir?"

"God grant they may," I answered; "but it is very doubtful."

Here was fresh trouble—trouble the whole command shared, but which rested heaviest upon Captain Bayard and myself. We were answerable to Colonel Burton for the manner in which we executed his trust.

"Ride down the valley," said the captain to me after I had concluded my account of what Brenda had said, "and look for Lieutenant Hubbell's camp. It cannot be far from here. Tell him to send me three days' grain for forty animals. While you are gone I will select a camp farther down stream, and within easy communication with him, park the train, and establish order. We will remain here until we know what has become of the boys."

I found the New Mexican cavalry camp three miles down the river, and obtained the desired forage. When I returned our new camp was established, fires burning, and cooking well under way.

Captain Bayard informed me that the detachment of Mexican cavalry which had accom-

panied us thus far would leave at this point and not rejoin us. "I have ordered Baldwin to grain his horses and be ready to start in search of our boys at daybreak," continued the captain. "You will accompany him. We shall be in no danger, with Hubbell so near. You can take thirty pounds of grain on your saddles, and you will find plenty of water on the Carizo where it breaks from the hills."

"How many days are we to stay out?"

"You are to take five days' rations. If the boys are not found in that time I fear they will never be found."

I went to bed early, and soon fell into a fitful slumber, which lasted until an hour before midnight. I arose, dressed, and sat down by the smouldering camp-fire, a prey to unpleasant reflections.

Suddenly the sound of a cantering horse approaching from the north fell upon my ears. What could it mean? I listened intently. The horse slowed down to a walk. He entered the camp. The voice of Private Tom Clary, who was posted as sentinel No. 1, challenged: "Halt! —who comes there?"

"A friend—Corporal Frank Burton," was the answer.

"Blest be the saints! Corpril Frank, laddie, is it you—and aloive?" said the sentinel, forgetting in his joy to continue the usual formality of the challenge or to call the corporal of the guard.

Springing from my seat I walked towards the sentinel, and there, by the light of the moon, I saw Frank, mounted upon Sancho, with Vic in his arms. I reached up to take my dog, but the boy quickly exclaimed:

"Be careful, sir, be careful! She's badly hurt. Here's the letter she brought. Henry is alive."

To attempt to relate all that now occurred would be impossible. In some mysterious manner the news of Frank's arrival crept through the camp, and half-dressed figures of officers and soldiers gathered about the camp-fire, curious to listen to an account of the boy's adventure. One little, blanketed figure ran out of the darkness, caught Vic's face between her two palms, nestled her cheek against it, and with a cheerful "good-night," disappeared as suddenly as she had come.

I took Vic in my lap as I sat on the ground, and by the light of a blazing pine-knot proceeded to examine her condition. I found the mouth and feet of the poor animal full of the spines of the *cholla* cactus, a growth which is simply a mass of fine thorns. This cactus grows in patches, and when the dead clusters fall to the ground the spines stick to everything touching them. The dog had stepped into a bed of these bunched needles, and filled her feet, and in trying to remove them with her teeth had thrust them through cheeks, lips, and tongue, literally closing her jaws. Her paws bristled with them like pin-cushions.

As to Frank's adventures: After leaving the Arnolds, as already described by Brenda, he retraced the route to Carizo Creek and to the Rio Puerco without seeing any sign of his brother. Returning to the west he dismounted at the crossing of the Carizo. He felt sure that if Henry had been captured by the Navajos he must have been taken in the dry bed of that creek.

A long and patient search resulted in the discovery of tracks made by several ponies

running along the eastern side of the Carizo to the north and the hills. One of the set showed the print of iron shoes. Frank mounted again and followed this trail up the valley for some hours. He was thinking about returning, when he saw a white object moving on a hill-side, far in advance. It seemed to tumble, rise, and go in a circle, then tumble, rise, and circle again. Frank's curiosity was aroused, and he rode on to examine the object. A few hundred yards more revealed the fact that he had come upon the missing Vic, and that something was seriously the matter with her. At first Frank thought she was mad or in a fit, but as he came nearer she sat up and made demonstrations of joy at his approach. He dismounted, and found her in the condition already described. On the ground was a chip, neatly cut and shaven, which she was in vain attempting to take between her sealed jaws. Frank understood the matter at once. Whenever Victoriana was sent on a message she was given a stick to deliver. It was plain that some one had sent her to either Frank or me. Of course, it could have been no one but Henry. She had come thus far, and

had stepped into a bed of *cholla*. In trying to remove the needles from her feet she had absolutely sealed her mouth; in the attempt to recover the chip she had made the movements that had attracted the boy's attention.

Nothing was written on the stick. Around the dog's neck was tied a cravat of dirty buckskin. Untying and opening it, Frank found the inner surface covered with writing, evidently traced in berry-juice with a quill or a stick. It read as follows:

"Captured by the Navajos. Am herding ponies north of Twin Buttes, at the head of Carizo. Come to butte with cavalry, and wave handkerchief from left peak about noon. If I do not come, look for me in plain north of butte. Don't worry; I'm all right.

"HENRY."

I remained at the fire long after every one had returned to their beds or duty, busy in extracting the *cholla* spines from Vic's mouth and feet. The dog seemed to understand the necessity of the treatment she was receiving, and bore the pain submissively, with only occasional moans and cries, until the operation ended. She then

received a drink of water, and went to bed with Frank.

At daybreak the rescue detachment left camp, retraced our route to the Carizo, where Corporal Frank put us upon the trail of the Indians. We climbed to the highest point reached by the path, and saw it descend on the opposite side to a brook, deep in the valley. Here we halted, took the horses a short distance down the slope we had just ascended, picketed them in a grassy nook, and Frank and I started to ascend the left peak.

"Mr. Baldwin," I said, as I moved away, "when you see us start to return, saddle and bridle as rapidly as possible, so as to be ready for emergencies."

"I'll do so. You can depend upon us to be ready when wanted," was the reply.

We scrambled through a scattering growth of piñon and junipers for several yards, and at last came to a perpendicular shaft of sandstone twenty feet high, with a flat top. The diameter of the shaft was about fifty feet.

"Henry could not have come up here, or he never would have set us to attempt an impossi-

bility," said Frank, as his eyes ran up and down the rock.

"Perhaps it may not be so impossible as it appears," I replied. "Let us walk round the butte."

We passed to the right, and, having found a practicable place for attempting the ascent, accomplished the feat in a few moments.

On the flat summit we found the remains of former fires that had undoubtedly been lighted as signals. The view was grand and extensive. Directly to the north lay many verdant valleys—grazing-grounds of the nomadic Navajos. One of these valleys lay at the foot of the mountain upon which we stood, with a bright stream of water crossing its hither border. Well out in the valley were several flocks of sheep and goats, and close to the opposite side of the brook was a herd of ponies.

After Frank had looked long and anxiously towards the flocks and herds, he said: "Those specks near the ponies must be men, I suppose. I wonder if Henry is among them? Shall I make the signal?"

"Not yet. It is not yet noon. Let us lie

down among these rocks, where we shall be less conspicuous, and use the field-glass."

"Tell me what you see, sir, if you please."

"There are five large flocks of sheep in the charge of a lot of women, some mounted and some on foot. The pony herd, which must number several hundred, is in charge of three naked Indians—boys, I think. There are no other persons in sight. Take a look for yourself."

Frank accepted the glass and surveyed the valley. "I can see nothing that looks like Henry," he said. "He certainly cannot be there. Why are those boys so ghostly white?"

"They are covered with yeso to protect them from sunburn."

"Oh yes—whitewash."

"Gypsum. The Mexicans use it for whitewash, and to preserve the complexion."

"Well, those boys must have plastered it on thick; they look like living statues. Not a rag on them except 'breech-clouts.' Hello, there comes a troop around that mound to the right. Must be two hundred men."

Taking the glass, I looked again. Coming into sight from the opposite side of an elevation

on the farther side of the valley was a party of two hundred and fifteen Navajo warriors. They rode to each flock of sheep in succession, stopped near the women a few moments, and then came down to the pony herd. They approached the boys, and one large Indian, who appeared to be the chief, lifted the smaller boy out of his saddle, and, swinging him to his shoulder, dashed around the herd at full speed, and then set him back in his own saddle, and patted him approvingly on the back.

The party next proceeded to exchange the ponies they were riding for fresh ones from the herd, and then disappeared behind the trees which bordered the brook to the west.

"The pony that small boy rides looks like Chiquita," remarked Frank; "but the saddle and bridle are different. Señora Perea said that Manuel was herding ponies for the Navajos, and that he was naked."

"Yes, I know; but the letter Vic brought from Henry made no mention of another boy, and there are three with that herd. But let us make the signal and see what will happen."

Standing up and advancing to the edge of the

butte's top, I waved my handkerchief from side to side, keeping my eyes fixed upon the three boys. They formed in line, facing us, looked long in our direction, and then, as if started by a spring, they flew down the plain, leaped the brook, and galloped up the long ascent towards the concealed cavalrymen.

THE three Indian boys were doing their utmost to excite their ponies to their greatest speed up the height. As they sped on they glanced repeatedly backward, as if fearing pursuit. Higher and higher they came up the steep until we could not doubt it was their intention to reach the command.

"What does it mean? What does it mean?" exclaimed Frank. "Why are those Navajo boys running their horses in this direction? It can't be—"

"Never mind, Frank," I interrupted. "Let us get down to the men as soon as we can. The Indian women are already riding after the war-party."

At considerable risk to life and limb we slid down the ragged angle which we had ascended,

and hurried to where Baldwin and the soldiers stood beside their saddled steeds.

We had barely reached the crest from which we could see the valley when the three whitewashed boys appeared on their panting and foaming animals, the little one on the buckskin pony in the lead.

"What in the world is this?" exclaimed Baldwin. "Three whitewashed young redskins! What do they want of us?"

"Here we are!" shouted a familiar voice, in excellent English. "Here we are—Manuel, Sapoya, and I!"

Before we could sufficiently recover from our surprise, or, rather, calm our joyful realization of a hope born of the boys' start from the valley below, they were among us, and Henry had sprung from his horse and embraced his brother, leaving a generous coating of *yeso* upon the army blue. Tears of joy had ploughed two streaks through the whiting on his face, and lent a comical effect to the boyish countenance. A general handshake ensued, and Corporal Frank asked, "Where are your clothes, Henry?"

"Confiscated by the chief Elarnagan."

"Not to wear?"

"Well, no; I think they might prove baggy on his diminutive person."

"Then why did he take them?"

"He has a numerous progeny, and the young Elarnaganitos have an article apiece. My saddle and bridle went to Mrs. Elarnagan. She rides astride, you know."

"When did the chief take your clothes?"

"Just as soon as I arrived in the valley my horse and I were stripped of— But hold on, Frank; what am I thinking of?" and Henry ran to one of the other boys, a graceful youngster whose perfect limbs and handsome face the *yeso* could not mask, and who sat his horse as if he were a part of the animal. Saying something to him in an undertone, the boy dismounted and approached me with Henry, who said, in Spanish: "This is Manuel Augustine Perea y Luna, of Algodones. It is he who planned the escape when I told him there were soldiers near."

I took the Mexican boy's hand and assured him of the great happiness his escape afforded me, and the greater happiness it would afford his mother and relatives.

Frank approached, took Manuel's hand, and then dropped it to give him a hearty and brotherly embrace.

"Ah, Manuelito mio, I dreamed many dreams of rescuing you as we marched through this country, but I never believed they would be realized," he said.

"But the little Enrique acted, and I am here," laughed Manuel.

"And Frank acted, too," said I, "as you shall soon hear; and you will learn that it took both boys to effect your rescue."

"Pardon me," replied Manuel, "but it is not safe to remain here longer. Elarnagan, whom you saw leaving the valley with his warriors, is intending to move down the Lithodendron to attack your train somewhere on the Colorado Chiquito."

At the close of his remarks Manuel turned away, as if to mount his horse, and then, as if correcting an oversight, he said, "Wait one moment, sir." Going up to the third boy, he spoke a few words to him in an unknown tongue. The boy sprang to the ground and came forward. "This is Sapoya," continued Manuel, "a Cherokee boy,

whom I found a captive when I joined Elarnagan's band. He is my brother, and will go with me and share my home."

Sapoya extended his hand and clasped mine. He was a handsome Indian boy, about the same age and height as his friend. He addressed me in Navajo, which was interpreted by Manuel: "I am glad to meet one who has helped to open the broad land again to my brother and me. But our horses stand still, while those of our enemy fly to retake us."

Evidently the Mexican and Cherokee boys had no desire to again fall into the hands of the Navajo chief. We made no further delay, but mounted and forced our animals down the mountain defiles as rapidly as possible. As soon as the route would permit, Henry and Manuel rode on each side of Frank, and I heard the former ask about Vic. Frank answered in Spanish, so that the Mexican boy might understand. Such expressions as "La perra brava!" "La fina perrita Vic!" from time to time showed they were hearing of Vic's adventures.

Finding that Corporal Frank was not doing himself justice in his narration, I drew alongside

the boys and related what I knew of Frank's midnight ride and rescue of Vic, an event which, had it not occurred, would have left Henry and his friends still in captivity. At the conclusion of my tale Manuel changed his position from the flank to one between the brothers, and, taking a hand of Frank in his left, and one of Henry's in his right, rode on a few moments in silence. Then he said: "God has given me, among many friends, two that are something more. But for your brave acts I should still be a captive. Thank you for myself, my dear mother, and Sapoya."

Having reached the wagon-road crossing of the Carizo, we turned at a canter over the divide between it and the Lithodendron. As we rose above a terrace our attention was attracted to two mounted Indians scurrying off into the broken and higher country on our right.

"Ah, look!" shouted Manuel; "they expected to stop three naked, unarmed boys, and they are surprised to meet a troop of cavalry! Viva los Estados Unidos! Run, you sheep-stealers, we are safely out of your hands!"

Upon reaching the summit of the divide the whole war-party stood revealed, far to our right,

out of rifle-shot. Plainly, our presence was a great surprise to them. Although they greatly outnumbered us, the country was too open for their system of warfare, and they were poorly armed. They stood sullenly aloof, and allowed us to canter past unmolested.

Just as our rear was passing them we noticed a solitary warrior advance and show a white cloth.

"That is Elarnagan," said Manuel. "He wants to speak with you."

Accompanied by the Mexican boy to act as interpreter, I advanced to the chief. He took my hand with dignity, and said he accepted the loss of his pale-faced captives as the fortune of war, but he demanded the return of Sapoya. He said that in a fight with the Utes, ten years before, his people had captured a Cherokee chief, who was visiting that tribe with his wife and child. The chief and his wife had died, and he, Elarnagan, had brought up the child as his own. He asked that Sapoya be restored to him.

I called the Indian lad to me and, repeating the words of the chief, said, "You may answer for yourself."

"Sapoya says to the bravest warrior of the

"'GOD HAS GIVEN ME, AMONG MANY FRIENDS, TWO THAT ARE SOMETHING MORE'"

Navajos, that he is grateful for all the favors that he has received, and that he thinks he has returned by hard service ample payment for all. He brought parents, three horses, and ample clothing to the Navajos; he takes nothing away but the pony he rode. He has shared his blanket and food with his brother, Manuel, for these many moons, undergoing fatigue and exposure with him, until his heart beats as one with his comrade's, and he desires to go with him to his home and become one of his people."

The chief said nothing in reply, but advancing gave his hand in amity to both boys, and rode back to his people.

"He is a good chief and a brave one," said Manuel, as we rejoined the command, "but I should cherish kindlier memories of him if he had given us some clothing and an extra blanket."

Later, as we were riding slowly out of the bed of Lithodendron, Frank said, "I do not see how the Indians came to spare Vic."

"One of them did attempt to kill her, but I threw my arms about her and the chief patted her head and gave orders that she should not

be hurt. I think if her collar had not been taken off at Laguna she would have been killed in a scramble to possess it. Even Elarnagan would have considered her life worthless compared with the possession of such a beautiful trinket."

"The chief seems to have taken quite a liking to Corporal Henry," I remarked.

"Not enough to allow him to retain his clothing," said Manuel; "but he would not permit him to be deprived of his pony. Perhaps you saw him, when you were on the butte, dash round the herd with Henry on his shoulder?"

"Frank and I saw it," I answered.

"He said, when he placed Henry back upon Chiquita, 'He will make a brave chief.'"

Camp was reached a little after dark, and the boys plunged into the river to remove the *yeso*, and then dressed themselves in civilized garments, Henry drawing on his reserve, and the others from the quartermaster's stores.

Had not Victoriana been a modest doggie, the amount of praise and attention she received from the four boys would have turned her head;

and the boys themselves had no reason to complain of the kindly congratulations they received from the infantry company.

Word was sent to Lieutenant Hubbell that Manuel Perea had been rescued, and the following morning all the New Mexicans not on duty rode into camp to congratulate the boy upon his escape. Spanish cheers and Spanish felicitations filled the air for an hour.

When the volunteers had gone and quiet was resumed, Brenda came, and her delight at seeing the boys again showed itself in ceaseless caressings of Vic and many requests for a repetition of the account of their flying ride when the signal was waved from the butte. When she at last withdrew, to repeat the story to her relatives, the corporals and I wrote a letter to Señora Perea, to be delivered by her son. In my portion I related the circumstances attending his recovery, detailing the part taken by the boy corporals, the dog, and the troop. I said no one desired to claim the generous reward she had offered, since no one in particular had rescued Manuel; many things had combined to enable him to escape. If the lady insisted upon pay-

ing the reward, we all desired that it should be devoted to the education of Sapoya.

Frank added a few lines, and Henry closed the letter. The younger corporal wrote:

"I've laughed with the rest over my two days' captivity among the Navajos, and made light of it. I don't mind telling you that after shivering through two nights without clothes and without enough blankets, being bitten by mosquitoes and flies, and scorched daytimes by the sun, I begin to think Manuel a great hero.

"You know when I saw you I told you I was going to bring back Manuel or be a prisoner with him. That, of course, was all foolish talk, for I planned nothing. To be sure, I was a prisoner with him for two days and had something to do about bringing him back, but it all happened without planning. It seems as if God directed us all through. Frank, Vic, the soldiers, officers, and myself—even the dry time from Jacob's Well to the Lithodendron—all had something to do with finding Manuel.

"About the reward the lieutenant speaks of, we think none of us deserve it. We've talked it over, and we think if you would give Sapoya a chance at school, and if you cannot make a white boy of him make him an educated man, that would be the best reward. He's very intelligent, and if he can have a good chance will learn fast.

"Frank and I have a scheme we hope you will approve of. Mr. Duncan has secured a detail from the

War Department to a boys' military school in the States as instructor in tactics, and will probably go in November. We are intending to ask papa to let us join that school after the Christmas holidays. We want you to send Manuel and Sapoya there. Won't you, please? Be sure and say yes. Think what a fine chance it will be for Sapoya.

"You know we boys feel something more than a friendship for one another. I suppose it is like the comradeship of soldiers who have stood shoulder to shoulder in battle. There is a tie uniting us that is closer and firmer than friendship; we feel more like brothers.

"We will write often. Hoping Manuel will arrive home safe, and that he may never again be a captive,

"I remain your friend,

"HENRY BURTON."

Our letters were despatched by Manuel and Sapoya to Lieutenant Hubbell's camp, where Captain Bayard directed the boys to await the detachment of New Mexican cavalry which had accompanied us from the Rio Grande and which was shortly to return there.

We resumed our march the following day at a very early hour, and as we passed the cavalry camp two half-dressed boys came bounding out to the road-side to once more repeat their affectionate good-byes and renew their promises to meet in the future.

The march continued for a week longer, through a region over which the Pullman car now rushes with the modern tourist, but through which we moved at the gait of infantry. The boy corporals and Brenda Arnold climbed eminences, looked through clefts in precipices into the sublime depths of the great cañon, stood on the edge of craters of extinct volcanoes, penetrated the mysterious caverns of the cliff-dwellers, fished for trout in a mountain lake, caught axolotl in a tank at the foot of San Francisco Mountain, shot turkeys, grouse, and antelope, and enjoyed the march as only healthy youngsters can. Brenda became a pupil of the boys in loading and firing their revolvers, carbines, and fowling-pieces, and made many a bull's-eye when firing at a mark, but invariably failed to hit anything living. Henry said she was too tender-hearted to aim well at animals. That she was no coward an incident to be told in a future chapter will prove.

When our train and its escort reached Fort Whipple, or, rather, the site of that work — for we built it after our arrival—the Arnolds caught up their cattle from our herd, and after a two

weeks' stay in Prescott removed to a section of land which they took up in Skull Valley, ten miles to the west by the mountain-trail, and twenty-five miles by the only practicable wagon-road. This place was selected for a residence because its distance from Prescott and its situation at the junction of the bridle-path and wagon-road made it an excellent location for a way-side inn.

At a dress-parade held the evening before the family's departure for their new home, Brenda sat on her pony, Gypsy, near Captain Bayard, and heard an order read advancing her young friends from the grade of corporal to that of sergeant, "for soldierly attention to duty on the march, gallant conduct in the affair at Laguna, and meritorious behavior in effecting the rescue of captive boys from the Navajos at Carizo Creek; subject to the approval of Colonel Burton."

XI

BOTH PONIES ARE STOLEN

"HERE, Frank, come and help push this gate. I can't start it alone."

"Don't be in such a hurry, Henry. Wait just a moment. I think I hear a horse coming down the Prescott road. I want to see if it is the express from La Paz."

The younger boy ceased his efforts to close the gates, and advancing a few steps before the entrance of the fort, looked up the valley to where the road from Prescott appeared from behind a spur of the foot-hills. The two boys had mounted their sergeant's chevrons and adopted white stripes down the legs of their trousers. As they stood side by side Vic approached and placed herself between them, nestling her delicate muzzle against the younger boy's hip and responding to his caresses with waves of her plumy tail.

"Do you think we shall hear from father, Frank?"

"We ought to; you know he said in his last letter he was getting settled at the Presidio, and would soon send for us."

"Takes twelve days to bring a letter from San Francisco. I suppose it 'll take us longer to go there; seems to me he might get ready for us while we are on the road," said Henry, lugubriously. "I'm getting mighty tired of opening and shutting these gates."

"You forget father has to visit all the posts where companies of his regiment are stationed. That will probably take him all of a month longer."

"And we must go on opening and closing gates and running errands in Arizona? But come; let's get a swing on 'em and watch for the expressman afterwards. We haven't much time before retreat."

The gates closed a fort which we had built since our arrival in Arizona. Peeled pine logs, ten feet long, had been set up vertically in the ground, two feet of them below the surface and eight above, enclosing an area of a thousand

square feet, in which were store-rooms, offices, and quarters for two companies of soldiers and their officers. At corners diagonally opposite each other were two large block-house bastions, commanding the flanks of the fort. The logs of the walls were faced on two sides and set close together, and were slotted every four feet for rifles. At one of the corners which had no bastions were double gates, also made of logs, bound by cross and diagonal bars, dovetailed and pinned firmly to them. Each hung on huge, triple hinges of iron.

The two boys returned to the gates, and, setting their backs against one of them and digging their heels in the earth, pushed and swung it ponderously and slowly, until its outer edge caught on a shelving log set in the middle of the entrance to support it and its fellow. Then, as the field-music began to play and the men to assemble in line for retreat roll-call, they swung the second gate in the same way, and braced the two with heavy timbers. The boys then reported the gates closed to the adjutant.

As the companies broke ranks and dispersed the boy sergeants went to the fifth log, to the

left of the gates, and swung it back on its hinges. This was one of two secret posterns. On the inside of the wall, when closed, its location was easily noticeable on account of its hinges, latches, and braces; on the outside it looked like any other log in the wall. Their work being completed, the boys asked permission of the adjutant to stand outside the wall and watch for the mail.

"All right, sergeants," said the adjutant; "there is no further duty for you to perform today."

Frank and Henry ran through the postern, and arrived on the crest of the bluff overlooking the Prescott road just as a horseman turned up the height. The news that the La Paz courier had arrived spread rapidly through the quarters, and every man not on duty appeared outside the walls.

Joining the boy sergeants, I said, "Boys, if you want to drop the job of opening and closing the gates, it can hereafter be done by the guard."

"Thank you, sir. We took the job, and we'll stick to it," replied Sergeant Frank.

"I wonder if Samson could lift those gates as

easily as he did the gates of Gaza?" questioned Henry, seating himself on a log which had been rejected in the building and taking Vic's head in his lap and fondling her silken ears.

"We can't remain here much longer," said Frank; "I think this express will bring an order for us to go to San Francisco."

"Very likely. No doubt life here is not very enjoyable for boys."

"I should say not," said Henry, "for we can't look outside the fort unless a dozen soldiers are along for fear the Apaches 'll get us."

"But you can go to Prescott."

"Prescott!" in a tone of great contempt; "twenty-seven log cabins and five stores, and not a boy in the place — only a dozen Pike County, Missouri, girls."

"And we can't go there with any comfort since Texas Dick and Jumping Jack stole Sancho and Chiquita," added Frank.

Further conversation on this subject was temporarily interrupted by the arrival of the expressman. A roan bronco galloped up the slope, bearing a youthful rider wearing a light buckskin suit and a soft felt hat with a narrow brim.

He was armed with a breech-loading carbine and two revolvers, and carried, attached to his saddle, a roll of blankets, a haversack, and a mail-pouch.

Dismounting, he detached the pouch, at the same time answering questions and giving us items of news later than any contained in his despatches.

After handing his pouch to the quartermaster-sergeant, his eyes fell upon the boy sergeants.

"I saw Texas Dick and Juan Brincos at Cisternas Negras," he said, addressing them.

"My! Did you, Mr. Hudson?" exclaimed Henry, springing to his feet and approaching the courier. "Did they have our ponies?"

"You know I never saw your ponies; but Dick was mounted on a black, with a white star in his forehead, and Juan on a cream-color, with a brown mane and tail."

"Sancho!" said Frank.

"Chiquita!" said Henry.

"Do you know where they were bound?" asked Captain Bayard.

"I did not speak to them, nor did they see me; I thought it would be better to keep out of the way of such desperate characters in a lonely

place. I learned from a friend of theirs at Date Creek that they intend to open a monte bank at La Paz."

"Then they are likely to remain there for some time."

"Can't something be done to get the ponies back, sir?" asked Frank.

"Perhaps so. I will consider the matter."

The mail was taken to my office and soon distributed through the command. Among my letters was one from Colonel Burton, the father of the boy sergeants. He said he had been expecting to send for his sons by this mail, but additional detached service had been required of him which might delay their departure from Whipple for another month, if not longer. He informed me that a detail I had received to duty as professor of military science and tactics in a boys' military school had been withheld by the department commander until my services could be spared at Fort Whipple, and that he thought the next mail, or the one following it, would bring an order relieving me and ordering me East. This would enable me to leave for the coast about the first week in November.

Frank and Henry shared my quarters with me, and that evening, seated before an open fire, I read their father's letter, and remarked that perhaps I should be able to accompany them to San Francisco, and, if the colonel consented to their request to go to the military school with me, we might take the same steamer for Panama and New York.

"Oh, won't that be too fine for anything!" exclaimed the younger sergeant. "Then I'll not have to leave Vicky here, after all."

Vic, upon hearing her name called, left her rug at my feet and placed her nose on Henry's knee, and the boy stroked and patted her in his usual affectionate manner.

"Then you have been dreading to leave the doggie?" I asked.

"Yes; I dream all sorts of uncomfortable things about her. She's in trouble, or I am, and I cannot rescue her and she cannot help me. Usually we are parting, and I see her far off, looking sadly back at me."

"Henry is not the only one who dreads to part with Vic," said Frank. "We boys can never forget the scenes at Los Valles Grandes, Laguna,

and the Rio Carizo. She saved our lives, helped recover Chiquita, and she helped rescue Manuel, Sapoya, and Henry from the Navajos."

"Yes; but for her I might have lost my brother at La Roca Grande," remarked Henry. "That was probably her greatest feat. Nice little doggie—good little Vicky—are you really to go to San Francisco and the East with us?"

"I believe if I only had Sancho back, and Henry had Chiquita, I should be perfectly happy," observed the elder brother.

After a slight pause, during which the boy seemed to have relapsed into his former depression, Henry asked:

"Do they have cavalry drill at that school?"

"Yes, the superintendent keeps twenty light horses, and allows some of the cadets to keep private animals. All are used in drill."

"And if we get our ponies back, I suppose we shall have to leave them here. Do you think, sir, there is any chance of our seeing them again?" asked Frank.

"Not unless some one can go to La Paz for them. Captain Bayard is going to see me after supper about a plan of his to retake them."

"I wonder what officer he will send?"

"Perhaps I shall go."

"Father could never stand the expense of sending them to the States, I suppose," said Henry, despondently.

"They could easily be sent to the Missouri River without cost," I observed.

"How, please?"

"There is a quartermaster's train due here in a few weeks. It would cost nothing to send the ponies by the wagon-master to Fort Union, and then they could be transferred to another train to Fort Leavenworth."

"Frank, I've a scheme!" exclaimed the younger boy.

"What is it?"

"If Mr. Duncan finds Sancho and Chiquita, let's send them to Manuel Perea and Sapoya on the Rio Grande. When they go to the military school they can take our horses and theirs, and we'll join the cavalry."

"That's so," said Frank. "Manuel wrote that if he went to school he should cross the plains with his uncle, Miguel Otero, who is a freighter. He could take the whole outfit East for nothing.

There would remain only the cost of shipping them from Kansas City to the school."

"Yes, but before you cook a hare you must catch him," said I.

"And our two hares are on the other side of the Xuacaxélla[1] Desert," said Frank, despondently. "I suppose there is small chance of our ever seeing them again."

Our two boy sergeants had found life in Arizona scarcely monotonous, for the hostile Apaches made it lively enough, compelling us to build a defensible post and look well to the protection of our stock. A few years later a large force, occupying many posts, found it difficult to maintain themselves against those Indians, so it cannot seem strange to the reader that our small garrison of a hundred soldiers should find it difficult to do much more than act on the defensive. Close confinement to the reservation chafed the boys.

A ride to Prescott, two miles distant, was the longest the boys had taken alone. Two weeks before this chapter opens they had been invited

[1] Pronounced Hwar-car-hál-yar.

to dine with Governor Goodwin, the Governor of the Territory, and he had made their call exceedingly pleasant. When, at an advanced hour in the evening, the boys took leave of their host and went to the stable for their horses, they found them gone, with their saddles and bridles.

Inquiries made next day in town elicited the information that two notorious frontier scamps, Texas Dick and Juan Brincos, an American and Mexican, were missing, and it was the opinion of civil and military authorities that they had stolen the ponies. The boys took Vic to the Governor's, and, showing her the tracks of her equine friends, she followed them several miles on the Skull Valley trail. It was plainly evident that the thieves had gone towards the Rio Colorado.

After supper I accompanied the commanding officer to his quarters. He told me that the express had brought him a communication from the department commander, stating that, since Arizona had been transferred to the Department of the Pacific, our stores would hereafter be shipped from San Francisco to the mouth of the Rio Colorado, and up that stream by the boats

of the Colorado Steam Navigation Company to La Paz. He said he had decided to send me to La Paz to make arrangements with a freighter for the transportation of the supplies from the company's landing to Fort Whipple.

"And while you are in La Paz," said the captain, "look after those horse-thieves, and turn them over to the civil authorities; but, whether you capture them or not, be sure to bring back the boys' ponies."

"What do you think about allowing the boys to go with me?"

"No doubt they would like it, for life has been rather monotonous to them for some time, especially since they lost their horses. Think it would be safe?"

"No Indians have been seen on the route for some time."

"The 'calm before the storm,' I fear."

"The mail-rider, Hudson, has seen no signs for a long time."

"So he told me. The excursion would be a big treat to the lads, and, with a good escort and you in command, Duncan, I think they will be in no danger. Tell the adjutant to detail a

corporal and any twelve men you may select, and take an ambulance and driver."

"Shall I go by Bill Williams Fork or across the Xuacaxélla?"

"The desert route is the shortest, and the courier says there is water in the Hole-in-the-Plain. There was a rainfall there last week. That will give you water at the end of each day's drive."

I returned to my rooms and looked over an itinerary of the route, with a schedule of the distances, and other useful information. After making myself familiar with all its peculiarities, I told Frank and Henry that if they desired to do so they might accompany me.

They were overjoyed at the prospect. Henry caught Vic by the forepaws and began to waltz about the room. Then, sitting down, he held her head up between his palms and informed her that she was going to bring back Sancho and Chiquita.

"I do not intend to take Vic, Henry," I said.

"Not take Vic? Why not, sir?"

"The road is long and weary—six days going and six returning, over a rough and dry region—

and she will be in the way and a constant care to us."

"But how are we going to find our horses without her? She always helps whenever we are in trouble, and she will be sure to assist us in this if we take her," said Sergeant Henry, emphatically.

"She need be no care to you, sir," said the elder boy; "Henry and I will look after her."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, boys, but I cannot take the dog. She will be left with Captain Bayard."

This decision made the boys somewhat miserable for a time. They commiserated the dog over her misfortune, and then turned their attention to preparations for the journey.

"Have you ever been to La Paz?" asked Frank.

"I have never been beyond Date Creek in that direction," I replied.

"Is the Xuacaxélla really a desert?"

"Only in the rainless season. Grasses, cacti, and shrubbery not needing much moisture grow there. One of the geological surveys calls it Cactus Plain. It is one hundred miles long. There is water in a fissure of a mountain-spur

on one side called the Cisternas Negras, or Black Tanks, but for the rest of the distance there was formerly no water except in depressions after a rainfall, a supply that quickly evaporated under a hot sun and in a dry atmosphere. A man named Tyson has lately sunk a well thirty miles this side of La Paz."

"It was at Black Tanks the expressman saw Texas Dick and Juan Brincos with our ponies," said Henry. "What a queer name that is!—Juan Brincos, John Jumper, or Jumping Jack, as nearly every one calls him."

"He is well named; he has been jumping stock for some years."

"I thought Western people always hanged horse-thieves?"

"Not when they steal from government. Western people are too apt to consider army mules and horses common property, and they suppose your ponies belong to Uncle Sam."

"Frank," said Henry, just before the boys fell asleep that night, "I felt almost sure we should recapture the ponies when I thought Vic was going, but now I'm afraid we never shall see them again."

XII

INDIANS ON THE WAR-PATH

THE following day we were so delayed by several minor affairs that we did not begin our journey until the middle of the afternoon.

At the time of which I write there were but two wagon-roads out of Prescott—one through Fort Whipple, which, several miles to the north, divided into a road to the west, the one over which we had marched from New Mexico, and a second which left in a northwesterly direction. We took the latter, pursuing it along the east side of Granite Range for eight miles, when we passed through a notch in the range to Mint Creek, where the road made an acute angle and followed a generally southwesterly course to La Paz.

We halted for the night at the creek, eight miles from the fort. Our ambulance was pro-

vided with four seats — one in front for the driver, fixed front and rear seats in the interior, with a movable middle seat, the back of which could be let down so that it fitted the interval between the others and afforded a fairly comfortable bed. On the rack behind were carried the mess chest, provisions, and bedding, and inside, under the seats, were the ammunition and some articles of personal baggage. Beneath the axle swung a ten-gallon keg and a nest of camp kettles.

While supper was being prepared the boys wandered about the reed-grass in a fruitless search for some ducks they had seen settle in the creek. Private Tom Clary, who was acting as our cook, having spread our meal of fried bacon, bread, and coffee upon a blanket to the windward of the fire, called them to supper. While sugaring and stirring our coffee, the cook stood by the fire holding two long rods in his hands, upon the ends of which were slices of bacon broiling before the glowing coals. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Look there, sergeant laddies! look there!" raising and pointing with both sticks and the

rashers of bacon towards the reed-grass behind us.

There in its very edge sat Mistress Vic, winking her eyes and twitching her ears deprecatingly, plainly in doubt as to her reception.

"Stop, boys! keep quiet!" I said, to prevent a movement in her direction. "Vic, you bad girl, how dared you follow me?"

No reply, only a slow closing and opening of the eyes and an accompanying forward and backward movement of the ears.

"Go home! Go!"

The setter rose, dropped her head, and, turning dejectedly, disappeared with drooping tail into the tall grass. Both boys exclaimed at once:

"Don't drive her off, sir! Poor little Vic!"

"Well, go and see if you can coax her back. If she returns with you she may go to La Paz."

The boys ran eagerly into the grass, and soon I heard them soothing and pitying the dog, telling her that it was all right, and that she could go. But it was evident she doubted their authority to speak for me, for Henry presently came running towards me.

"She won't come, sir. Keeps moving slowly back in the direction of the fort. She looks so sorry and so tired. Only think how badly she feels, and it is a long distance to Whipple! Can't she stay with us until morning?"

"Then she will not come with you?"

"No. She is your dog, and knows it. She never disobeys you."

"But she followed me here; that looks very much like disobedience."

"But you did not tell her not to come."

"I believe you are right. I forgot to tell her to stay."

"And she did not hear you tell the corporal to tie her, sir. You told him in your room, and she was outside."

"Then you think she is not to blame for following us?"

"Of course not. She's a military dog, and always obeys orders."

"But how guilty she looked."

"It was not guilt made her look so, sir; it was disappointment."

"Yes, I think you are right, Henry. I'll let her go with us. Let us try an experiment, and

see if she understands ordinary conversation. You know some people think dogs do."

"Yes, sir; I know Vic does."

"I'll speak to her without altering my tone of voice. Now watch. 'Here, Vicky, little girl, it's all right; you may go with us.'"

Out of the reeds, bounding in an ecstasy of delight, came Vic. She sprang about me, then about the boys, the soldiers, and animals, and then approaching the fire, sat down and looked wistfully at the rashers of bacon Clary was still broiling. It was settled in her dog mind that she was now a recognized member of our party.

We resumed our journey with the first break of dawn and rode to Skull Valley. The first section of the road passed through a rough, mountainous, and wooded country; but at the end of thirteen miles it entered a level valley, which gradually broadened into a wide plain that had been taken up by settlers for farms and cattle ranges. Being well acquainted, I made several calls at the log-cabins which skirted the road. At the Arnold house we were made very welcome, and after a generous dinner were escorted through the house and stables by the entire

family. I had visited the valley many times when on scouting or escort duty, and had seen the Arnold cabins gradually substituted for their tents, and their acres slowly redeemed from grazing ground to cultivated fields; but since my last visit Mr. Arnold had adopted an ingenious means of defence in case of an Indian attack.

The house and stables from the first had been provided with heavy shutters for windows and doorways, and loop-holes for fire-arms had been made at regular four-foot intervals. These the proprietor had not considered ample, and had constructed, twenty yards from the house, an ingenious earthwork which could be entered by means of a subterranean passage from the cellar. This miniature fort was in the form of a circular pit, sunk four feet and a half in the ground, and covered by a nearly flat roof, the edges or eaves of which were but a foot and a half above the surface of the earth. In the space between the surface and the eaves were loop-holes. The roof was of heavy pine timber, closely joined, sloping upward slightly from circumference to centre, and covered with two feet of tamped earth. To obtain water, a second covered way led from the

earthwork to a spring fifty yards distant, the outer entrance being concealed in a rocky nook screened in a thick clump of willows.

As we were climbing into our ambulance, preparatory to resuming our journey, Brenda said:

"If you had reached here three hours earlier you might have had the company of two gentlemen who are riding to La Paz."

"Sorry I did not meet them. Who were they?"

"Mr. Sage and Mr. Bell from Prescott. They are going to purchase goods for their stores; and that reminds me that not one of you has mentioned the object of this journey of yours."

"That is really so," I replied. "You have made every minute of our call so interesting in showing us your improvements and the fort, and in doing the hospitable, that we have not thought of ourselves. Frank, tell her about the ponies."

Sergeant Frank, aided by Sergeant Henry, told in full of the loss of their animals, and said we intended to try to capture Texas Dick and Juan Brincos and recover Sancho and Chiquita.

At the end of the boys' story, Brenda asked: "The thieves were a Mexican and an American?"

"Yes."

"The American had a scar on the bridge of his nose, and the Mexican had lost his front teeth?"

"Exactly. What do you know about them, Brenda?"

"They were here, but I did not see their ponies nearer than the stable; they were black and cream color. The Mexican traded saddles with uncle. You'll find the one he left in the lean-to, on a peg beside the door."

Both boys leaped to the ground and ran round the house to the lean-to, and presently returned with Henry's neat McClellan saddle. It had been stripped of its pouches and small straps, but was otherwise unharmed.

"Well, when I come back with Chiquita, Mr. Arnold, I'd like to trade saddles."

"All right, youngkett, I'll trade, or you can take it now, and welcome," replied the ranchman.

"No; I'll leave it until I return."

The saddle was taken back to the lean-to, and after a few more words of leave-taking we started up the valley. A few miles of rapid travelling brought us to a steep ascent into a mountainous

range to the right. We had proceeded but a short distance through a narrow and rugged roadway when we were overtaken by the military expressman whom we had left at Fort Whipple. He had come from Prescott to Skull Valley by a short cut.

"I have a letter for you, lieutenant," said he, approaching the ambulance.

Unfastening the mail-pouch, he turned its contents upon the back seat. A heap of loose letters and three well-worn books strewed themselves over the cushion. Frank picked up the books and examined their titles.

"Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Euripides' *Alcestis* and *Medea*, and a Greek grammar!" exclaimed the astonished youngster. "What are you doing with these college text-books on the La Paz trail?"

"Making up conditions," replied the courier, a blush deepening the brown of his face.

"What are conditions?" asked Henry.

"Oh, blissful ignorance! Why was I not spared the task of enlightening it?" answered the courier. "Conditions are stumbling-blocks placed in the way of successful trackmen, football players, and

rowing men by non-appreciative and envious professors."

"'Joseph Gould Hudson, University of Yalvard,'" read Frank from the fly-leaf of the *Memorabilia*. "Is that your name, Mr. Hudson?"

"I'm so borne on the Yalvard catalogue."

"Please explain, Mr. Hudson," I said, "how a college boy happens to be in Arizona running the gantlet of this mail-route and making up conditions in Greek?"

"I was stroke in the crew that won the championship for Yalvard at New London one year ago, and got behind in these. I was conditioned, and being ashamed to face an angry father, struck out for myself on the Pacific coast. I drifted about from mining-camp to cattle-range until I was dead broke; this place offered, and I took it because I could find nothing else. I've had lots of opportunities for reflection on the Xuacaxélla. I'm the repentant prodigal going home to his father."

"Oh, you are no prodigal, Mr. Hudson," observed Henry. "We've heard all about you; you are too brave."

"Thank you, Sergeant Henry. No, I've not

wasted my substance in riotous living, nor have I eaten husks, but I've been prodigal in wasting opportunities."

"Lost a whole college year, haven't you?" I asked.

"I hope not. There is a German university man at La Paz who has been coaching me. He thinks if I keep at work until after Christmas I can go on with my old class. This is my last trip, and if I escape the Apaches once more I'm going to lay off and work hard for a few months, and then return to New Havbridge for examination. There's something in that letter that concerns me."

Opening the letter, I learned that Captain Bayard knew Mr. Hudson's story. He said this was to be the last trip of the courier, but that after his return to La Paz he would come out to meet me at Tyson's Wells and report whether the horse-thieves were in town. He also suggested that in establishing a transshipment storehouse at the steamboat-landing I place Hudson in charge. The pay would be of use to him while "making up."

The courier wished us a pleasant journey, and

rode away at a scrambling canter up the pass. He had been gone but a few moments when I heard a shout, and, looking up, saw him standing on a pinnacle by the way-side, on the summit of the ascent. He was looking in the opposite direction, and I saw him fire three shots from his carbine in rapid succession. Dismounting the men, I made rapid preparations to meet an attack, and proceeded to work our way slowly up the height, and when we reached the narrow level at the top we found Hudson and the two soldiers that formed our advance occupying a shelter among the rocks to the left, and gazing down the opposite slope.

"What is it, Hudson?" I asked.

"A party of Indians attempted to jump me here. There they go now—across that opening in the sage-brush!"

A dozen Indians dashed across an open space south of the road, but too far away for effective shooting, and then two more passed over, supporting a third between them.

"You must have hit one of them."

"I tried to. I think another was hurt more seriously, by the way he acknowledged my shot."

"Are you hurt?"

"A slight scratch on the arm near the shoulder, and my horse is hurt."

An examination of Hudson's arm proved that the scratch was not serious, but I thought it best to exchange his horse for one belonging to a soldier. We then went on, Frank and I walking in advance of the ambulance mules.

"There's something down there in the road by Ferrier's grave, sir," said Corporal Duffey. "Looks like a dead man."

"Is that where Ferrier was killed?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; I was in command of the detail that came here to look him up. He had built a little stone fort on that knoll up yonder, and kept the redskins off three days. He kept a diary, you remember, which we found. He killed six of them, and might as many more, but he couldn't live without sleep or food, and the rascals got him. They scattered the mail in shreds for miles about here."

"Who was Ferrier?" Frank asked.

"He was a discharged California volunteer, who rode the express before Mr. Hudson."

"Do you think Mr. Hudson knew his predecessor had been killed?"

"Yes; the incident was much talked of at the time."

We were nearing the object in the road. Suddenly the mules caught sight of it, backed, and crushed the ten-gallon keg under the axle against a bowlder — a serious mishap, as our after experience will show. Walking on, we came to the mutilated bodies of two men, several yards apart, whom we had no difficulty in recognizing to be the tradesmen Bell and Sage. With axe, bayonets, and tin cups we dug a shallow grave beside Ferrier's. We placed the bodies side by side, and heaped a pyramid of stones above them.

The courier again bade us good-bye, and we went on. The rest of the ride through the mountain-pass was accomplished without adventure, and evening found us encamped at Willow Springs. The boys shot a few quail here, of the variety known as the California quail, distinguished by an elegant plume of six feathers on the top of its head. Clary broiled them for breakfast.

The road on the following day was so rough

that for much of the way we were unable to move faster than a walk—the slow walk of draught animals. When near a place called Soldiers' Holes, on account of some rifle-pits sunk there, the corporal called my attention to a pool of blood in the road.

A close examination led us to believe that two men had fallen, that one had been wounded, and that a second party had come and taken the wounded man away. The locality was well adapted for a surprise. On the left was a growth of dense shrubbery extending from the road to the foot of the mountain-range. On the opposite side was an open plain.

We were moving on again, when Frank remarked:

"There seems to have been a big gathering of Apaches along this road."

"Yes; a war-party bent on mischief. They have struck at two points, and I fear a third—Date Creek—may have been attacked by this time. That is where we are to pass the night." Then turning to Corporal Duffey, I continued: "The road from here to the creek is soft and loamy, and we are not likely to make much

noise; caution the men to be quiet and not show themselves outside the track. If the Indians are at the ranch it will be best for us to appear there unexpectedly."

"Do Indians never stand up like white men, and fight?" asked the younger boy.

"Frequently, but their system is different from ours; however, our latest military tactics appear to be modelled on theirs."

Although this section of our journey was but twenty-five miles long, our rate of progress had been so slow that the day was nearly closed when we came in sight of the lines of cottonwoods that bordered Date Creek. We turned at last sharply to the left, and began a descent through a narrow ravine towards the creek. We were nearing its widening mouth when a half-dozen sharp reports of fire-arms broke upon our ears. A halt was ordered and the men directed to prevent the animals from betraying our presence by whinnying or braying. Telling Sergeant Henry to remain behind and keep Vic with him, I went in advance with Sergeant Frank.

"What do you think is going on?" asked my companion, as several more reports rang out.

"What I feared; the Apaches are attacking the men who went out to bring in the dead and wounded men at Soldiers' Holes."

"And if Mr. Hudson was not the wounded man there, I suppose he is sure to be in this scrape. Why not rush in with the escort and frighten them away?"

"They may be too many for us," I answered, "and it will be prudent to learn the situation at the ranch before we go nearer. I want to join the white men without the Indians' knowledge, if possible."

"If Mr. Hudson is not dead, he must know we are here."

"He may be there, and the men may know we are on the road, but it certainly does not look like it."

"Can't Vic be sent with a message?"

"No; she will not take a message to a stranger."

We had now reached a point from which we could see a log cabin, a stable, and an open shed or tool-house. On the side of the buildings towards us, as if screening themselves from an enemy in the opposite direction, were a few men.

"If you would like me to, sir, I can crawl to the house without being seen," said Frank. "That cart, wagon, oven, and stack will screen me."

"Yes, you can do it easily. Tell Mr. Hopkins that we are here—seventeen, counting you two boys—and to make no demonstration when we close up. I will explain a plan to him which, I think, will enable us to teach the Apaches a lesson. If you find Mr. Hudson there, tell him to show himself at a window or door."

XIII

THE BOY SERGEANTS DO GOOD SERVICE

FRANK dropped flat upon the earth and worked his way to the cabin without being seen. Instantly I received a signal from Mr. Hopkins through a back window, and a moment later Mr. Hudson looked out of a back door and raised his hat. I was glad to see that his college career was still a possibility.

Hurrying back to the ambulance, I caused the animals to be grouped in charge of the driver and two soldiers, and with the rest of the detail moved in the direction of the ranch buildings.

It had become so dark that we might possibly have passed over the open space without being seen, but, for fear of accidents, we covered it, as Frank had done, on all fours. The first persons I met when I rose to a vertical position were Hudson and Frank, who took me to Mr. Hop-

kins. The ranchman greeted me with the assurance that the arrival of my party was a godsend, and had probably saved their scalps.

I learned that the men at Date Creek, including the mail-carrier, numbered seven; that three were in the stable and four in the house. These buildings were the same distance from the stream, and fifty feet apart. The bank of the creek was perpendicular for a mile either way, standing fully twelve feet above the surface of the water; but there was a notch with a sloping descent, midway between the buildings, down which the live-stock was driven to water. This slope offered the only practicable point of attack, unless the Indians chose to move by one of our flanks over a long level.

Mr. Hopkins said he had crept out to the shrubbery on the edge of the precipitous river-bank, to the left of the slope, just before my arrival, and had seen on the opposite shore a small party of men moving through the willow branches towards our left. He believed it was a flanking-party, intending to make a feint from that direction and enable the main body to charge through the notch in the bank. Believ-

ing the repelling force to be but seven, the Indians were quite sure of success.

I was convinced that Mr. Hopkins's inferences were correct; but in order that no mistake should be made, I sent two veterans in frontier service, Privates Clary and Hoey, to reconnoitre both flanks. They were gone half an hour, and returned with the information that no demonstration was being made towards our right, but that a dozen or more men had gathered on the opposite shore, at a point where they could cross and turn our left flank.

Preparations to meet this movement were begun at once. Sergeant Frank was sent to the ambulance with orders for the men in charge to bring in the animals, two at a time, and fasten them in the rear of the stable and stack. This was easily accomplished in the darkness. The ambulance was left in charge of Vic.

While this was going on, and I was overlooking the construction of rifle-shelters on the flanks, Sergeant Henry approached and asked if he could not be of some use. Something in the tone of the boy's voice showed me he felt he had been neglected, while his brother had been kept busy.

"What would you like to do?" I asked.

"Does a soldier choose his duty, sir?" was the reply, uttered with some dignity.

"Not usually, sergeant, it is true. I have a very important thing for you to do—something for which I was intending to look you up. Go and find Private Clary, and tell him to help you carry several armfuls of hay from the stack to the right of the slope. Make a heap, so that when it is lighted it will illuminate the approach from the creek. Ask Mr. Hopkins if he has any kerosene or other inflammable stuff to sprinkle on the hay and make it flash up quickly and burn brilliantly. Then throw up a shelter in which you can lie and be ready to light the hay when signalled."

"Yes, sir. Thank you. I'll attend to everything."

Not more than fifteen minutes had elapsed when the boy sergeant returned and informed me that the bundle of hay was prepared and a shelter constructed.

"Mr. Hopkins has two gallons of axle-grease and two quarts of spirits of turpentine."

"Excellent. Mix them together and sprinkle

the hay thoroughly. Then place yourself in the shelter, and when you see a light flash from the west window of the house light your bonfire."

"I'll do so, sir," and the boy ran away in the darkness.

An hour had passed when loud whoops gave us warning of the enemy's approach. It was the war-cry of the terrible Apaches. Not a sound came from the creek. I strained my eyes in that direction, but nothing was visible in the black darkness beneath the pendulous branches of the willows.

At last I saw the fixed reflections of the stars in the surface of the pool diffuse themselves into myriads of sparkling atoms. A considerable body of Indians must be in the water, but none appeared in sight. Yes, they were crossing in two columns, to the right and left of the notch, concealed by the high shore, and would shortly unite and charge up the slope. Baldwin ran to the stable to tell the men there that the Apaches were coming, and to be on the alert.

The whoops of the flanking party redoubled, and were accompanied by a desultory firing, which the four men opposing them answered in

the same way. Then I saw the sparkling water of the pool cut off from my sight, and knew that a body of men stood on the slope between us and the creek.

"Frank, show the light! Men, ready!"

The lantern flashed from the window, quickly answered by a flash on the bank, and a mass of red flame threw its luminous tresses skyward, bathing the whole scene in light. In the notch, half-way up the slope, stood a momentarily paralyzed group of nearly a hundred painted warriors. Every rifle in the hands of the white men in the two buildings spoke, and instantly the notch emptied itself pell-mell of its living throng. Only a few prostrate bodies showed the Apaches had been there.

With the discharge of fire-arms a silence immediately fell upon the scene, in marked contrast to the shrieking and yelling of a moment before. The bonfire burned low, and went out. Once more we were in darkness.

We believed the Indians would make no further demonstration, and an hour later a scouting party ascertained that they had gathered their dead and departed. Sentinels were posted, the

ambulance run in by hand, the stock fed, and a midnight meal cooked.

While sitting by the camp-fire, listening to the sizzling of the bacon and sniffing the aroma of the coffee, Mr. Hopkins introduced me to his men and guests, and I heard an explanation of the tracks and blood at Soldiers' Holes.

Early that morning three gentlemen, who had passed the night at the ranch, started for Prescott. They were a Mr. Gray, a Scotch merchant at La Paz; Mr. Hamilton, a lawyer of the same place; and a Mr. Rosenberg, a freighter. When near the Holes, Mr. Hamilton, who was riding in advance, was shot by Indians concealed in the sage-brush. Mr. Rosenberg's mule was wounded, and plunged so that his rider fell to the ground. Mr. Gray, seeing the plight of the freighter, rode to his side, seized him by the collar, and aided him to leap to a seat behind him.

It is probable that this act of generous daring might have ended in the death of both men but for a diversion caused by the sudden and unexpected appearance of the military expressman. He came up a slope from a lower level, and, tak-

ing in the situation at a glance, let fly three shots from his breech-loading carbine that caused the Indians to lie low. The three men rode to the ranch, and Mr. Hopkins and his three workmen accompanied them to bring in the body of Mr. Hamilton. The Indians did not begin to concentrate at the creek until after the burial.

Supper being over, the boys and I were getting into our blankets for the rest of the night, when Mr. Hudson, who had been preparing to depart, came to bid us good-bye.

"I seem to take frequent leave of you, these times, lieutenant," he said.

"Yes; and your farewell ride with the Whipple mail so far seems to have been anything but monotonous. I think the *Anabasis* would be a more suitable subject of study on this route than the *Memorabilia*."

"'Hence they proceeded one day's journey, a distance of five parasangs, and fell in with the barbarians,' might well be said of this trip, for a fact."

"Hadn't you better travel with me the rest of the way?"

"I think we have seen the last of the Apaches. They do not range south and west of here. Good-bye, sir."

"Good-bye, until we meet at Tyson's Wells."

The next morning, when the boys, Vic, and I were taking our places in the ambulance, Mr. Hopkins and his men, Mr. Gray and Mr. Rosenberg, approached us mounted. They informed me that they were going to La Paz.

"The Ingins are gettin' a little too thick here," observed the ranchman. "I find it diffikilt to git proper rest after a hard day's work. Think I'll stay away until Uncle Sam's boys thin 'em out a little more."

"Can I obtain a five or ten gallon keg of you, Mr. Hopkins?" I asked. "Ours was accidentally smashed on the road."

"Haven't a keg to my name, lieutenant. One way 'n' ernuther all's been smashed, give away, or lent."

The ride from the ranch to the edge of the desert plain was twelve miles, a portion of it over a rugged ridge. To the point where we were to ford the creek was two miles, and there the hired men, pack - mules, and ranch cattle

turned off on the Bill Williams Fork route to the Rio Colorado.

Once on the level of the Xuacaxélla our team broke into a brisk trot, and we rolled along with a fair prospect of soon crossing the one hundred miles between Date Creek and La Paz. Messrs. Gray, Rosenberg, and Hopkins shortly turned into a bridle-path which led into a mine. Before taking leave of us Mr. Gray told me that my camping-place for the night would be at the point of the third mountain-spur which jutted into the plain from the western range.

We had not travelled long before we realized our misfortune in having smashed our water-keg. Each individual in our party possessed a three-pint army canteen, which had been filled when we forded the creek in the early dawn. These were to last us until evening, through an exceedingly sultry day. Frank, Henry, and I did our best to overcome our desire for water, but the younger boy could not refuse the appeals of Vic, when she looked up with lolling tongue and beseeching eyes to the canteens.

The men were the greatest sufferers, unless I except their horses. Long before mid-day their

canteens were empty and their mouths so dry that articulation was difficult and they rarely spoke.

At five we arrived opposite the third spur, where we found a wand sticking in the ground and holding in its cleft end a slip of paper. It proved to be a note from Mr. Hudson, saying that this was the place to camp, and the Black Tanks were on the southern side of the spur, three miles distant.

In a few minutes, with the horses and mules divested of saddles, bridles, and harnesses, leaving two men behind to guard the property and collect fuel for a fire, we were on the way to water.

Hurrying along, we saw before us a long, irregular range, apparently three thousand feet in height, which had been cleft from summit to base as if by a wedge. In this rent we found water—water deposited in a natural reservoir by the periodical rainfalls in millions of gallons, a reservoir never known to be dry.

Climbing over the dike which enclosed the main deposit, we descended to the cistern, filled our cups, and swallowed the contents without

taking a breath. When we dipped up a second, Tom Clary looked into the depths of his cup with knitted brows.

"Whist, now, sergeant laddies!" he exclaimed. "Look into the wather! It's aloive with wigglers of ivery variety. They're 's plinty as pays in a soup."

"Ugh! And we are full of them, too, Tom," said Henry, looking into his cup with narrow-eyed anxiety.

Pausing in the act of taking a second drink, I looked into my cup, and saw that it contained myriads of animalcula and larvæ, which zig-zagged from side to side in the liveliest manner.

"Will they hurt us, Tom?" questioned Henry.

"I rickon they've got the worst of it, sergeant laddie; but I think I'd fale a bit aisier if I was blindfolded or takin' a drink in the dark. I prefer me liquid refrishment with a little less mate, not to minshin its bein' less frisky."

We had come to the Cisternas Negras with towels, intending to wash off the dust of travel. We now used one of them to strain the water, and were astonished to see that each gallon left behind it a plump spoonful of animalcula. The

water was sweet, but, after discovering the abundant life in it, we deferred drinking more of it until it had been boiled.

As we pursued the narrow path to camp in single file, we noticed Vic a considerable distance to the right, scouting and nosing about in an earnest manner. Evidently she thought she had made an important discovery, for she several times paused and looked in our direction and barked. But we were too hungry to investigate, and soon she disappeared from our view.

When we reached the ambulance the boys put a few cakes of hard bread in their pockets, and, taking their shot-guns, went out to look for some "cottontails" while supper was being prepared. Believing we were well out of the range of hostile Indians, I did not object to their going alone. They passed a considerable distance beyond the growth of *Cereus giganteus*, over a level stretch covered with knee-high bunch-grass and desert weeds, without seeing a hare. Pausing on the brink of a shoal, dry ravine, they stood side by side, and rested the butts of their guns upon the ground. Just then a shout of "Supper! supper!" came from the group at the camp-fire.

"Hate to go back without anything," said Frank, so I afterwards heard. "Strange we can't see a rabbit now, when we saw dozens on the way to the Tanks"

"That's because we didn't have a gun," said Henry.

"You don't believe the rabbits knew we weren't armed then and know we are now?"

"Hunters tell bigger stories than that about 'Brer Rabbit.' Not one has bobbed up since we got our guns."

Suddenly from the flat surface of the plain, not twenty yards from where the boys stood, where nothing but bunch-grass and low shrubbery grew, sixteen Indians sprang up to full height, like so many Jacks-in-a-box.

XIV

ON THE DESERT WITHOUT WATER

The boys were frightened. Their hearts leaped into their throats, and it was difficult for them to restrain an impulse to turn and run; but a soldierly instinct brought them to a "ready," with eyes fixed upon the probable enemy.

"Quick, Henry! shoot!" exclaimed Frank, intending to reserve his own fire.

The younger sergeant raised his double-barrelled shot-gun to his shoulder and pulled both triggers. Down went the sixteen Indians as if the bird-shot had been fatal to all. The plain became in an instant as objectless as it was a moment before.

"Load, Henry, and, backward, march!" said Frank, ready to fire whenever a head showed above the grass, and at the same time moving as rapidly as possible towards the camp-fire.

"How! how! how!" was chorused from the di-

rection of the Indians, and several naked brown arms were stretched upward, holding rifles horizontally in the air.

"That means peace," said Henry. "They aren't going to fire. Let's answer. How! how! how!"

"How! how! how!" Frank joined in, and at once the sixteen redmen sprang to their feet, apparently none the worse for Henry's double charge of bird-shot at short range. They held their weapons above their heads, and continuing to utter their friendly "How!" rapidly advanced towards the boys.

"They aren't playing us a trick, are they, Frank?" asked Henry, in an anxious tone.

"No," replied the elder boy, after snatching a glance to the rear. "The lieutenant and soldiers are saddling. The Indians dare not harm us on an open plain in sight of a mounted force."

The boys stopped, and the redmen came up and began shaking hands in a most friendly manner, over and over again, repeating "How!" many times. They were clad in loose and sleeveless cotton shirts, all ragged and dirty, with no other clothing. The one who appeared to be chief was distinguished by the possession of three

shirts, worn one above the other. Each man possessed several hares and field-rats, held against his waist by tucking the heads under his belt.

The boy sergeants and their strange guests reached the camp-fire, and the hand-shaking and exchange of amicable civilities went on for some time. The chief approached me and, placing a finger on one of my shoulder-straps, asked, in mongrel Spanish:

"Usted capitan?" (Are you the captain?)

I replied in the affirmative.

"Yo capitan, tambien; mucho grande heap capitan." (I'm a captain, too; a very great heap captain.)

He then asked where we were from and where we were going, and informed us that they were Yavapais on a hunting expedition. We exchanged hard bread with them for a few cottontails, and set Clary to making a rabbit-stew, the boys and I deferring our supper until it should be ready.

"Oh, Mr. Duncan," shouted Henry from the direction of the Indians, a few moments later, "come and see what these creatures are doing!"

I left the ambulance and joined the group of

soldiers who stood in a circle about an inner circle of seated Indians. Each Yavapai had selected a rat from the collection in his belt, and had laid it on the coals without dressing it or in any way disturbing its anatomy. He rolled the rat over once or twice, and took it up and brushed and blew off the singed hair. He placed it again on the coals for a moment, and, taking it up, pinched off the charred fore legs close to the body and the hind legs at the ham-joint. Replacing it on the fire, he turned it over a few more times. Picking it up for the third time, he held it daintily in the palm of his left hand, and with the fingers of his right plucked off the flesh and put it in his mouth.

When we were making our beds ready for the night, Vic, whom we had forgotten in the exciting events of the evening, trotted into camp and laid a horseshoe in Henry's lap. The lad took it up, and exclaimed:

"One of Chiquita's shoes!—a left hind shoe!"

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Private Sattler always shaped the heel of the left shoe like this, to correct a fault in her gait."

"May I look at the shoe, sergeant?" asked

Corporal Duffey, approaching from the group of men near the guard's fire. "Shoes are like handwriting—no two blacksmiths make them alike. I am a blacksmith by trade, and know all the shoes made by the smiths of our regiment. This," examining it, "is one of Sattler's. He put a side-weight on it, and here is the bevel-mark of his hammer."

"Then our ponies have certainly passed here, and Vic was on their trail when we saw her coming from the Tanks," remarked Frank; "but there could have been no scent after so long a time."

"Oh, she knows Sancho's and Chiquita's tracks," asseverated Henry; "she knows their halters, bridles, and will bring them when told to, without mistake."

The sentinel awakened us next morning at four o'clock, and informed us that the Indians had left two hours before. The animals were again driven to the Tanks, the vessels and canteens filled, and at six o'clock we were on the road. Nearly all our water was used in the preparation of breakfast, except that in the canteens. It would have been better if we had made a third trip to the

cisterns and refilled our coffee-pot and camp-kettles; but the delay necessary to do it, and the assurance that there was water at Hole-in-the-Plain, determined me to go on at once. The weather was a repetition of that of the previous day—hot and windless.

The road proved generally smooth, but there were occasional long stretches over which it was impossible to drive faster than a walk. About four in the afternoon we reached Hole-in-the-Plain, and found nothing but a few hundred square yards of thin mud. The fierce rays of the sun had nearly evaporated every vestige of the recent rainfall, and in twenty-four hours more the mud would be baked earth.

Vic, consumed with thirst and suffering in the extreme heat, waded into the mud and rolled in it until she was the color of a fresh adobe, and was, in consequence, made to ride thereafter in disgrace on the driver's foot-board.

We had intended to pass the night at the Hole, but want of water compelled us to move on. Very gloomy and doubtful of the outcome, we left the Hole-in-the-Plain. We were toiling slowly up a slope, nearly a dozen miles on this third

stage of the desert route, when a horseman overtook us, who proved to be Mr. Gray. He slowed up, listened to my account of our perplexities, and after saying many hopeful and cheering things, telling us that Tyson's Wells were now not far ahead, he galloped swiftly away in the darkness.

At midnight the road ascended to a considerably higher level and became suddenly hard and smooth. The driver urged the team into a series of brief and spasmodic trots, which lasted a couple of hours, when we again descended to a lower level, where the wearily slow gait was resumed. With the slower pace our spirits fell and our thirst increased. As Private Tom Clary expressed it to the driver:

"In a place like this a gallon of Black Tanks water would be acciptible without a strainer, and no reflictions passed upon the wigglers."

"That's so, Tom," called Henry, from the depths of his blankets; "I could drink two quarts of it—half and half."

"Half and half—what do you mean?" I asked.

"Half water and half wigglers," was the answer.

"I thought you were asleep."

"Can't sleep, sir; I'm too thirsty. Did drop off once for two or three minutes, and dreamed of rivers, waterfalls, springs, and wells that I could not reach."

"I've not slept at all," said Frank; "just been thinking whether I ever rode over a mile in Vermont without crossing a brook or passing a watering-trough."

"It's beginning to grow light in the east," observed the driver. "By the time we reach the top of the next roll we can see whether we are near the Wells."

"You may stop the team, Marr," said I; "we will wait for the escort to close up."

We got out to stretch our legs, while the straggling soldiers slowly overtook us. The man on the wounded bronco did not arrive until the edge of the sun peeped above the horizon, and I ordered him to remove the saddle and bridle, hitch the animal behind the ambulance, and take a seat beside the driver.

Just when we were about to start again, Frank asked permission to run ahead with the field-glass to the rising ground and look for Tyson's

Wells. I consented, and told him to signal us if he saw them, and that if he did not we would halt, turn out, and send the least worn of the escort ahead for relief.

Frank started, and presently disappeared behind some brush at a turn in the road. An instant later he shouted and screamed at the top of his voice. Whether he was shouting with joy or terror, or had gone out of his senses, we were unable to guess. It sounded like "Who-o-o-op! water! water! water!"

Had the boy seen a mirage and gone mad? We could see nothing but the broad hollow about us, barren and dry as ever. But still the boy continued to shout, "Water! water!" and presently he appeared round the bend, running and holding up what appeared to be a letter. It was a letter. When Frank reached the ambulance tears were in his eyes as he handed me a yellow envelope.

"Found it on the head of a barrel over there, with a stone on it to prevent it from blowing away."

Breaking open the envelope with trembling fingers, I read:

"TYSON'S WELLS.

"DEAR LIEUTENANT.—Please accept four barrels of water and four bushels of corn, with my compliments.

"GRAY."

Need I confess the emotions with which we realized the service this brave Arizona merchant had done us? or need I mention that Mr. Gray — God bless him, wherever he may be! — is always remembered with gratitude by me? for this is no idle incident invented to amuse a reader, but an actual occurrence.

Water!—four barrels!—one hundred and sixty gallons! That meant two gallons for every man and boy, and eight gallons for each animal. It meant rest, speed, safety.

We moved across the ravine and found the four barrels by the road-side. The animals were secured to the ambulance and the acacia bushes, the heads of the barrels removed, and after each person had satisfied his thirst the camp kettles were used, until horses and mules had drunk the contents of one each. The stock was then turned out to graze.

When coffee was poured, Private Tom Clary

arose, and, holding up his tin cup, said to his comrades:

"Here's a toast to be drunk standin', b'ys, and for many raysons, which I think nade not be explained to this assimbly, I'm glad to drink it in a decoction whose principal ingraydiant is wather. Here's to Mr. Gray, whose conduct at Soldiers' Holes, at Date Creek, and on the Walkerhelyer has won our admiration. May he niver lack for the liquid he has so ginerously dispinsed, nor a soft hand to smooth his last pillow, and plinty of masses for the repose of his sowl!"

Frank and Henry sprang towards the circle of soldiers, raised their cups as Clary finished his sentiment, and joined in the hearty response when he closed.

At one o'clock the animals were caught up, given the remainder of the water and their portion of the corn, and got ready for the road. Once up the slope Marr cracked his whip, the mules started into a trot, the horses of the escort broke into a canter, and amid the cheerful clatter of hoofs and the rattle of wheels we sped on our way as fresh as if we were just leaving Fort Whipple. A ride of twenty miles brought us to

Tyson's Wells. These were two in number, sunk at an intersection of several roads leading to settlements and mines, an accommodation to trains, flocks, and herds, and a profit to the owner.

I learned from Colonel Tyson that immediately upon his arrival Mr. Gray had hired a wagon to take water and corn to us. He had bargained for the driver to go until he met us, but the man being prepaid may account for his not fulfilling his agreement to the letter.

The rest of the day and night was spent at the Wells, the boys and I taking our supper at the Desert Hotel, kept by the colonel. At the table, Henry, in a tone of evident anxiety, asked if we should return the way we came.

"Yes, if we can find a few kegs in La Paz that will hold water," I answered.

"But we cannot haul kegs enough in the ambulance to supply the animals."

"It will not be difficult. We will follow the army custom in such cases, and I will promise you that there will be no suffering from thirst when we cross the desert again."

Just as we were preparing for bed Mr. Hudson arrived from La Paz. He informed me that

Texas Dick and Jumping Jack were there and in possession of the ponies; that there was to be a horse-race the day after to-morrow, and the ponies had been entered. At this news the boy sergeants became much excited, and proposed a dozen impracticable ways of going on at once and seizing their property.

Hudson said he had talked the matter over with Mr. Gray, and the merchant had advised that we give out a report in La Paz that we were there on the transportation and storehouse business only, and make no immediate attempt to capture the ponies. He said the town was full of the friends of the horse-thieves, and that our movements would be closely watched and reported to them. If they became alarmed they would probably run across the Mexican boundary at once.

"But why cannot we attend the race with the escort, as spectators, and seize them?" asked Frank.

"That is a move they will be sure to be looking for. If any of you go to the race, I believe neither of those men nor the ponies will be there."

I told Hudson to return to La Paz before day-

light and circulate the report that I was coming for the purpose he had mentioned. I also requested him to watch Jack and Dick, and if he saw them making preparations for flight to come and meet me. We were met on the outskirts of the town by Mr. Gray, who told us we were to be his guests during our stay, and that his corral and store-rooms were at the service of my men and stock.

Going directly to the house of the hospitable trader, we found it to consist of well-furnished bachelor quarters, with several spare rooms for guests. The boys were assigned a room by themselves, and I one adjoining them, in which we found ample evidence that our host had looked forward with pleasure to our visit and had fully understood boyish needs and desires.

Henry, after exchanging his travelling-dress for a neat uniform, appeared upon the veranda with glowing face and shining hair.

"Mr. Gray, how pleasant you have made our room for us! Have you any boys of your own?" he asked.

"Only two nephews, Sandy and Malcolm, in the 'Land of Cakes,'" was the reply.

"What a good uncle you must be to them!"

"Thank you, laddie. I hope the bairns are as fine boys as you and your brother."

"You are very kind to say so, sir. May I ask you a question?"

"A dozen, laddie. What is it?"

"When you overtook us on the desert you said it was not far to Tyson's Wells, and that we should soon be there."

"Ah! then you thought it a long way, sergeant?"

"Perhaps my terrible thirst had something to do with it, but it seemed more than twenty-five miles. I thought you had a queer notion of distances."

"Only a little deception to keep up your heart, laddie. I saw you were in sad need of water, and I made a hard ride to send it to you, but I wanted you to do your best to meet it. What do you think of the shrinking properties of water when applied to a desert road?"

"Wasn't it great, though! Those last twenty miles your four barrels shrank into nothing but a pleasant three hours' ride."

After dinner Mr. Hudson reported that he had

dropped information at the hotels and business places that we were here to meet a director of the Colorado Navigation Company. We also learned from him that the steamer *Cocopah* had arrived that morning from up-river, and was now lying at her landing, one mile below town, awaiting the return of the director from Wickenburg. Both Mr. Gray and Hudson were of the opinion that the horse-thieves were suspicious of our presence, for their agents had been unable to locate the ponies at any stable in town. The horse-race was advertised to come off on the afternoon of the following day, half a mile below the steamboat-landing, and Texas Dick and Juan Brincos had entered horses for the stakes.

Mr. Gray thought the appearance of the ponies in the race would depend entirely upon what course we pursued. If we attended the race the ponies would not be there; if we stayed away he had no doubt they would run.

Believing the trader's convictions to be correct, I instructed the escort not to go south of the town during the day of the races, and told Frank and Henry to amuse themselves about the streets or in the vicinity of Mr. Gray's residence. I then

started with our host to procure a building for a military store-house.

For the rest of the day the boys showed little disposition to wander about; they spent most of their time lounging on their beds with a book, or asleep.

XV

THE PONIES ARE FOUND

The following day the boy sergeants rose from their beds fully refreshed, and after breakfast began to explore the town. They made some purchases in the stores, and found much amusement in watching a bevy of Mojave Indian girls buying pigments to be used in adorning their necks, arms, and faces. Following the bronze maidens to the shore of a lagoon that backed up to the town from the river, they seated themselves beneath a cottonwood and witnessed the designing of tracings in many colors, made with endless and musical chatterings, accompanied by an evident consciousness that they were objects of interest to two pale-face boys.

After completing the tinting the girls would walk about for a while and display their work to admiring friends, and then plunge into and swim about the lagoon with the ease and grace

of a lot of mermaids; emerging with no trace left of their recent ornamentation, they would proceed to renew it in different designs, and take another swim.

"Quite like watering-place belles with extensive wardrobes," remarked Frank.

"And takes about as long to put on the paint as to put on a fashionable dress," said Henry, "but not so long to remove it."

Another thing that amused the boys was a *balsa*, or raft, made by the Mojaves, of the cane-grass which grew in the river-bottoms to the height of fifteen feet. A large bundle bound at the ends with grass ropes would sustain two men. The boys borrowed one of an Indian girl, who was sitting in the shade of some willows prinking herself artistically with an original and intricate pigmentary pattern. Stepping on board, they paddled about the lagoon for a considerable period.

Tiring at last of the sport, they separated, Frank saying that he was going for his shot-gun, and perhaps shoot for some quail, and Henry that he meant to find Tom Clary and set some lines for catfish.

The younger sergeant failing to find the soldier, selected a line, and, procuring some bait, returned alone to the lagoon. On his way he met the Indian girl walking along the sidewalk, an object of admiration and envy to the men and women of her people. Her bronze flesh was adorned with a lacelike tracery of beautiful design, in many tints.

"How exceedingly pretty!" said Henry, in Spanish, a language fairly well understood by the aborigines of the Southwest.

"I, or my paint?" asked the girl, coquettishly.

"The paint is well put on; but I think you prettiest just after a swim."

"Thank you, señor."

"May I use the balsa again, Indita?"

"Si, señor, and you may keep it, but return the paddle."

"Thank you. I will leave the paddle on the shore where you were sitting."

With this exchange of civilities Henry walked down to the pool. An idea had occurred to him. He wondered if he could not float down the river to the racing-ground and get a peep at Sancho and Chiquita, as they came in victors. He felt

sure no ponies in Arizona could outrun them. But Mr. Duncan had told the escort not to go to the race. True; but what harm could there be if he kept out of sight?

Placing an empty box on the raft for a seat, he took Vic on board, and began paddling out of the lagoon. Speed could not be made with such a craft; it was simply a convenience for crossing or journeying down the river. The Mojaves, whose village was five miles above La Paz, came down on freshly made *balsas* every day, but walked home, carrying their paddles.

Once well out of the lagoon, and in the river-current, the boy and dog were swept along at a swift rate.

A mile down the shore he saw a crowd of men, mounted and on foot, intently watching something inland. He was approaching the race-course. He made a landing on a sand-spit that struck off from an outward curve of the bank, and dragged the *balsa* out of the water.

The shore rose abruptly from the bar to a height two feet above his head. He lifted and boosted Vic up, and seizing the long tufts of overhanging grass and thrusting his feet into

the loops of willow roots, drew himself to the higher level and crept into a screen of low bushes.

Peering through the branches, Henry saw a straight-away course, parallel to the river, bordered for three hundred yards with the motley crowd of a mining and Indian country. At the northern end of the course was a group of ten ponies, out of which he found no difficulty in discovering two, a black and a cream-color, and recognizing in them the property of his brother and himself. In his opinion they were the handsomest animals in the group.

At the fourth signal—a pistol-shot—the ponies got away. Down the three-hundred-yard track they sped, and over the last fourth the black and cream-color led by a length, crossing the goal with Sancho half a neck in advance. Of course the little sergeant knew they would beat, and in spite of his sorrow at the loss of his ponies—intensified by this stolen sight of them—he could not refrain from clapping his hands and saying, aloud, "Bravo, Sancho! Bravita, Chiquita!"

The subdued cheer was promptly answered by a succession of barks at the foot of the tree, and

Vic, interpreting the boy's clapping and speech to mean that she was free to go, dashed off at the top of her speed for the race-course, and to its southern end, where the victors were now held by their dismounted riders. Vic bounded wildly about them for a few moments, and then, standing still, Henry saw each horse in turn place its nose to the dog's nose. One of the men struck the dog sharply with the loop of his bridle-rein, and as she fled back in the direction of the tree in which the boy was, he saw the riders hold a brief consultation and then follow the dog.

Henry, perceiving he was discovered, let himself down from the tree. Texas Dick and Jumping Jack approached.

"Ven acá, muchacho" (Come here, boy), said the Mexican.

Henry did not stir, and Dick said to his companion, in Spanish: "He does not understand your lingo. I will try him in English: Come here, boy."

Henry had not disregarded Juan's summons for any particular reason, but the remark of Dick gave him an idea. By pretending igno-

rance of Spanish he might learn something that would be of advantage to him. Accordingly, he came forward when Dick spoke.

"From Fort Whipple, ain't yer, sonny?"

"I am."

"D' ye know these critters?"

"The black is my brother's, the light is mine."

"Lookin' on 'em up, I s'pect?"

"We shall take them, if we can."

"You see, I was right," continued Dick to his companion, in Spanish. "They came here to take these horses."

"Then we better call for the prize, collect our stakes, and leave," said Juan.

"Where shall we go?" asked Dick. "Arizona's getting uncomfortable for me, and your kin across the Mexican line don't love you."

"Valgame Dios, no! Let's cross the river and go to San Diego or Los Angeles."

"Estar bueno. Come with us, youngster," he added, in English; "and mind ye keep a quiet tongue in yer head or ye'll have no head to wag it in after ye've spoke."

Henry followed the men to the head of the race-course, where they received their prizes

and winnings, and withdrew to the river-bank. There they divided the money and held a conference.

"We'd better cross the river to-night and camp at El Rincon until morning, and then strike for Dos Palmas and the coast."

"Shall we leave our monte and other stuff in town?" asked Juan.

"No; you stay here and take care of the boy, and I'll go back and sell out. Anastacio Barela will buy. Look sharp that the young soldier does not send a message by his dog. I heard lots of strange stories of her performances in that line at Prescott. I will bring down something for our supper and the road."

Dick galloped away, leaving the Mexican and Henry to await his return. As the twilight deepened into darkness the boy's thoughts grew more and more despondent. He now fully and sadly realized that his disobedience of orders had brought disgrace upon himself, and ruined every chance of recovering the ponies, for once the thieves got well away they were secure from capture.

It was night when Dick returned and told the

Mexican that he had made an advantageous sale of their gambling outfit.

"Now, kid, ye kin slope," he said, addressing the disheartened lad. "Tell the lieutenant that he kin look for us at Hermosilla, on the other side of the Mexican bound'ry. Good-bye."

Henry hurried away towards La Paz, with Vic close at his heels. There was no occasion for haste, for he felt that nothing in the town could overtake the lost Sancho and Chiquita; still he hurried and stumbled on in the darkness.

"Oh, Vicky," said the boy, in his misery, stooping to caress his companion, "I ought to be court-martialled and dishonorably discharged from the service for this. I have done very wrong. I have lost our ponies for good."

The dog licked his hand sympathetically, and then suddenly bounded away, barking, and Henry heard Frank's voice say:

"Why, Tom, here's Vic!"

"Thin Sargint Hinery must be near," said the soldier.

"Yes, I'm here, Frank—and oh, Frank, I'm in such trouble!" And in a curiously jumbled

and half-incoherent manner Henry related his afternoon's experience.

At the conclusion of the recital the three held a consultation as to what was best to be done. Time was precious, and the town was nearly two miles distant.

"Sargints," said Private Tom Clary, "I belave we can do bist by oursilves. Me afthernoon's lave ixpires at tattoo, but if, as me shuparior officers, ye'll allow me to be out of camp a bit longer, I think we can sarcumvint the thaves."

"We'll do our best to get you excused by the lieutenant," said Frank.

"Thank you, sargint laddie. You say the grass-boat is near by, Sargint Hinery?"

"Not far from here, Tom. Just west of the middle of the race-course."

"And the thaves are going to camp and cook their supper on the other side?"

"So they said."

"Thin we'll attimpt to interfare with their arrangemints. I think the liftinint will commind an 'absence without lave' if we bring in the raskils and the ponies."

The soldier and boys turned, and, bidding Vic keep close to them, hurried to the bar where Henry had left the gift of the Mojave belle. As they were lifting the elastic raft into the water they heard the voices of men on the river, accompanied by the splashing of water, and knew that the horse-thieves were fording the stream.

The Colorado was shoal, having an average autumnal depth of four feet at La Paz. Clary secured two poles from the river débris lodged on the bar, one for Frank and one for himself. Henry sat on the box in the middle, holding his companions' guns across his lap with one hand, and grasping Vic's collar with the other. The well-filled game-bags lay between his feet.

The *balsa* moved slowly towards the opposite shore and swiftly down-stream, the stalwart Irish soldier's feet settling into the loosely bound stems as he poled. Becoming alarmed when he found the water standing above his ankles, he called, in a subdued undertone:

"Sargint Frank, I belave I shall go through the bottom of this l'aky craft before we git across."

"Take Henry's paddle, Tom; it lies on the

right side of the box. Lay it across the reeds and stand on it."

"Ah, sure and that's betther. Kape yer ind a little more up-strame, sargint. We'll steer by the avening star."

In a few minutes the *balsa* lodged against the shore in the still water of a little cove. The boys and soldier were aware that they were landing some miles below their starting-point, for the current was strong and swift, while the horse-thieves had forded the river almost in a direct line. They climbed the bank, and ordering Vic to keep close by them, began to move as fast as possible up the shore.

They had made their way for nearly an hour over a rough and miry river-bottom when the setter showed sudden excitement and began sniffing to the right and left.

"She must have struck their path from the river to their camping-place, Tom," said Frank. "Look sharp, Vicky, look sharp!"

"But she seems to be working up-stream," said Henry. "I should think they would have gone straight inland."

"There's an excillint rayson for that, sargint

laddie," returned Clary. "One of the routes t' th' coast begins exactly opposite th' town, and they must go up-strame to foind it; El Rincon the landing-place is called."

"The Corner?"

"Yis, Th' Corner. Th' shore binds out there a wee bit."

Man and boys continued to struggle along, until across a level, grassless plot they saw, near a clump of cottonwoods, a fire, where Texas Dick and Jumping Jack were plainly visible, cooking their supper. On the side of the fire opposite the river were two saddles, upon which rested their rifles and revolvers. Still farther west the two ponies were picketed and grazing.

Clary told Henry to go to the ponies and stay there with Vic, while he and Frank crept upon the thieves. Screening themselves behind tufts and swells, and lastly behind the saddles, they worked across the level, the sound of their moving being covered by the booming and rushing of the mighty river. When within twenty yards of the fire and five from the saddles, Private Tom Clary sprang to his feet, aimed his double-barrelled shot-gun at the thieves, and shouted:

"Throw up your arrums!"

At the same instant Frank made a flying leap for the saddles, and seized the rifles and revolvers. Henry ran forward and assisted his brother in keeping Dick and Juan under the muzzles of their own rifles, while Clary securely bound them. This accomplished, the boys went back for a moment to renew their acquaintance with their horses. Yes, the chase was over, and their favorites were again in their possession; and it cannot appear strange that the young soldiers went into boyish ecstasies of delight at their good-fortune, embracing, patting, and talking to Sancho and Chiquita as if they understood all that was said to them.

But at last they joined Clary at the fire, and the three, while they continued to carry on the interrupted cooking of their captives, discussed ways and means of returning to La Paz, and it was decided to send the setter with a message. A note was pencilled on a page of Frank's diary, attached to Vic's collar, and she was taken to the river-bank and given a stick, with orders to deliver it to her master. With but little hesitation she plunged into the murky current, and soon

disappeared in the darkness in the direction of the other shore.

While the boy sergeants were going through these adventures I remained in La Paz. At retreat and tattoo roll-calls Corporal Duffey had reported Private Clary absent, adding the words "and unaccounted for," and at Mr. Gray's table the boys were absent from supper.

At first I gave myself no anxiety over the absentees, but at midnight, becoming alarmed, I began a search for them. I soon learned that Henry had been seen to paddle out of the lagoon on a Mojave *balsa*, accompanied by Vic, and that Frank and Clary had gone quail-shooting. I did not feel especially anxious about the older boy, for he was in the company of one of the most trustworthy of our veteran soldiers, and would probably soon turn up safe. But Henry—gone down the turbulent river on a frail bundle of grass—what might I not fear?

I led all the men of the detail—every one of them as anxious as myself—on a long and fruitless search beside the river, without coming upon a clew. Returning to Mr. Gray's, and dismissing the men, I sat upon the veranda alone, sadly

reflecting upon the absence of my young companions and Vic.

In the midst of my sad reflections there scrambled up the steps a wet and bedraggled dog, who dropped at my feet a chip. Carrying her in my arms to my room, I lighted a lamp and examined her collar, and found a few leaves of a memorandum-book covered with Frank's handwriting.

The news of Vic's arrival with a message spread quickly, and soon the household was gathered in my room and in possession of the news of the exploit of the boys and Tom Clary.

"Good! good!" exclaimed the director of the Navigation Company. "Come with me to the *Cocopah*. We'll steam across and get the whole party."

On the western shore of the Colorado, Private Tom Clary and the boy sergeants sat by the fire broiling quail, which they seasoned from the supplies of Texas Dick and Juan Brincos, and accompanied by slices of toasted bread from the same source. In the midst of their enjoyment of "quail on toast" a loud "who-o-of! who-o-of! who-o-of!" came across the river.

"Hullo!" said Henry; "the old *Cocopah* is starting for the Gulf mighty early. I should think the pilot would find it difficult to keep off the shores when it is so dark."

The boys could see by the boat's changing lights that her bow, which had been headed up-stream when she lay at the bank, was swinging slowly out into the stream, and they expected shortly to see her starboard lights as she headed downward. But she seemed to pause, with her furnace fires and pilot lanterns pointing towards them.

"Who-o-of! who-o-of! who-o-of!—patter, patter, patter." The noise of the steamer grew louder and louder, until the boys rose from their seats and stared in surprise at the rapidly growing lights.

"I really believe she is coming here," said Frank.

"She is, or she nades a dale of space to turn in," observed Private Tom.

Presently two tall smoke-stacks separated themselves from the darkness and appeared high above their heads.

"Ahoy there, boys!" shouted the captain's voice from the bridge.

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered Frank.

"Get ready to come on board! Below there —stand by to lower gang-plank! Now!—lower away!"

Down came the plank, and a joyous group of friends walked down to the shore to greet the boys and the soldier.

A few moments afterwards the boy sergeants led their ponies on board, and Private Tom Clary escorted the prisoners. The *Cocopah* cleared away and paddled back to the La Paz side, where Texas Dick and Juan Brincos were turned over to the civil authorities, and Sancho and Chiquita to the escort in Mr. Gray's corral.

Three days later the boys and I took leave of Mr. Hudson, who was now in charge of the government storehouse, and, accompanied by Mr. Gray, started for Fort Whipple. Hanging under the hind axle of the ambulance was a ten-gallon keg, and inside was another. We left La Paz early in the morning and arrived at Tyson's Wells at nine o'clock. Remaining there until six o'clock in the evening, we watered our animals, and with freshly filled kegs started for Hole-in-the-Plain, where we stayed until the

following evening, the animals passing the day on grass without water. A second night-drive brought us to Cisternas Negras, and the third to Date Creek, from which last point we resumed travelling by daylight.

At Skull Valley, at the earnest request of Miss Brenda Arnold, Henry was allowed to remain for a few days' visit. He promised to join the next incoming mail-rider, and to ride back to the fort by way of the mountain-trail.

XVI

APACHES IN SKULL VALLEY

It was near midnight, four days after my return from La Paz, that I sat by my open fire, absorbed in a recently published popular novel. I was suddenly aroused by a distant and rapid clatter of horse's feet. The sound came distinctly through the loop-holes in the outer wall of the room—loop-holes made for rifles and left open for ventilation. Dropping my book upon the table, I listened intently to the hoof-beats. Some one was riding from the direction of Prescott, evidently in great haste; and Arizona being a country of alarms, I surmised that the rider was coming to the fort. The horseman stopped at the great gates.

"Halt! Who comes there?" rang out the voice of Private Tom Clary, who was sentinel No. 1, stationed at the post entrance. "Sargint

Hinery, is it you, laddie?" the voice continued, in a lower and gentler tone.

"Yes, Tom; and, oh, tell Mr. Duncan, quick, that—"

"Whist! Take care, laddie! Howld on a bit!" and a rifle fell clattering to the ground and two solid feet sprang forward with a rush.

Hearing this, I started for the secret postern, and as I opened my door, heard the honest old soldier shout:

"Corpril uv th' guard, No. 1!" and, in a lower and appealing tone: "Liftinint, if ye hear me, come quick to the little sargint. I fear th' dear b'y is dyin'."

In an instant I was through the narrow gateway, standing beside a group of the guard that surrounded Clary, who, kneeling beside a panting and reeking pony, held the inanimate form of Henry Burton in his arms.

"Corpril Duffey, will ye let one uv the b'ys walk me bate a minate till I can take the laddie in?" asked Tom.

"Yes, Clary, go ahead, and stay as long as you're needed," was the kindly answer.

"Is it to your room I'll be takin' him, sor?"

asked Clary, rising and holding his burden across his breast.

"Of course, and place him on my bed. Corporal Duffey, send a man for the surgeon and hospital steward, and send another with the pony to the stable."

It was too dark to take in details, but I noticed Chiquita was utterly exhausted, and that she was covered with foam. Following Clary to my room, I saw, when the light fell upon Henry's face, that his right cheek and neck were bleeding, and that his left arm hung unnaturally limp by the bearer's side.

We placed him upon the bed, and Surgeon Coues, who had now arrived and pronounced the boy to be simply in a faint from loss of blood and over-exertion, applied restoratives and brought him back to consciousness. As Henry's eyelids raised, and he recognized me, he said, weakly:

"Oh, Mr. Duncan, tell Captain Bayard the Indians have attacked Mr. Arnold's ranch, and that Mrs. Arnold is dead!"

"Indians attacked the ranch! When?"

"About four o'clock."

"How many?"

"Don't know. Seemed as if there were over a hundred. And don't stop to worry over me. Don't stop an instant—these scratches are nothing—but send the soldiers, quick, or Brenda and all will be killed!"

"How did you get away from the ranch? But you are right, this is no time for talk."

I aroused the other officers instantly, and sent Frank to his brother. All assembled in my quarters, and, while the surgeon dressed the wounds in cheek and neck and set a fractured radius, orders for an expedition to Skull Valley were issued, and Henry told his story.

At the time this incident occurred the Californians had been mustered out of service and returned to their distant homes, and the garrison at Fort Whipple consisted of infantry only. But there were many "dough-boys" who were good riders, and a number of excellent horses were kept by the quartermaster for emergencies which required speed and short service.

Captain Bayard gave orders for a sergeant, three corporals, and twenty-two privates to be got in readiness for mounted service, with rations for five days. The command was given to

me, and Private Tom Clary immediately applied to be relieved from guard in order to accompany me. His request was granted.

Sergeant Frank concluded to remain with his brother.

"I know it is rough on you, Frankie," said Henry, "not to have a chance to win a few scars, too; but I should be dreadfully worried if you were to go, and I'm worried enough about Brenda now. You must stay with me."

And so it was settled, and Frank remained behind, lending his pony Sancho to Private Clary.

During all this preparation, dressing of wounds, and setting of fractures, Henry had managed to give us an account of what had happened at Skull Valley before he left. I will, however, repeat it a little more connectedly, with additions obtained later from other parties.

After I left Sergeant Henry in the valley, as I passed through there from the Xuacaxélla, he had for three days devoted himself to the amusement of his young hostess, Brenda, and her cousins.

There were many reasons why the Arnolds were not fearing an attack at the time, the prin-

cipal one being that the Indians had recently been defeated at Date Creek. With that affair they seemed to have withdrawn, and no signs of them had been seen since.

Near the close of the afternoon of the fourth day of Henry's visit a party of forty-one Apaches had suddenly appeared, and had spent an hour or more reconnoitring the valley and its approaches. Apparently becoming satisfied that they would not be interrupted in their attack by outside parties, they began active operations by collecting the Arnold cattle and horses, and placing them in charge of two of their number near the spring.

Next they fired one of the out-buildings, and under cover of the smoke gained entrance to a second, which stood less than a hundred feet from the north side of the house. Knocking the mud and chips from between the logs here and there, they were enabled to open fire upon the settlers at short range.

With the first appearance of the Indians, Mr. Arnold, assisted by two travellers who had arrived that afternoon from Date Creek on their way to Prescott, closed the windows and door-

ways with heavy puncheon shutters, removed the stops from the loop-holes, directed the girls to carry provisions and property into the earthwork, got the arms and ammunition ready, and awaited further demonstrations.

The available defensive force consisted of every member of the family, including Sergeant Henry Burton and the two strangers. The mother and daughters had been taught the use of fire-arms by the husband and father, and Brenda had been taught by the boy sergeants. In an emergency like the one being narrated, where death and mutilation were sure to follow capture, the girls were nerved to do all that could have been expected of boys at their ages.

Until the Apaches gained possession of the second out-building, few shots had been exchanged, and the besieged closely watched their movements through the loop-holes. It was while doing this that a bullet pierced the brain of Mrs. Arnold, and she fell dead in the midst of her family.

The body of Mrs. Arnold was borne to the cellar by the sorrowing husband, accompanied by the weeping children. The firing became des-

ultory and without apparent effect. Ball and arrow could not pierce the thick walls of the log-house; only through the loop-holes could a missile enter, and by rare good-fortune none of the defenders, after the first casualty, chanced to be in line when one did.

The family again assembled in defence of their home and lives, the grave necessity of keeping off the impending danger banishing, in a measure, the thoughts of their bereavement. An ominous silence on the part of the Indians was broken at last by the swish of a blazing arrow to the roof. Mr. Arnold rushed to the garret, and with the butt of his rifle broke a hole in the covering and flung the little torch to the ground.

But another and another burning arrow followed, and in spite of desperate and vigilant action the pine shingles burst into flames in several places. At this juncture Henry, whose station was on the south side of the house, approached Mr. Arnold and said:

"Sir, I see Chiquita grazing near the spring, close to the edge of the willows, and the two Indians there with the herd keep well this way, watching the fight. If you think best, I will

creep through the passage, mount, and ride to the fort for the soldiers."

Mr. Arnold did not at once reply. He took a long look through a loop-hole towards the spring, and Henry, misinterpreting his silence, said:

"Don't think I want to desert you, sir, and skip the ranch. I'll stay here and do my best with the others, but I thought, perhaps, if I could do it, I might save you all."

"God bless ye, my boy; nobody can doubt yer fightin' 'bility; yer was born a soldier. I was only thinkin' yer chance uv gittin' by them two redskins at the spring 's mighty small."

"Then you think it a good plan?"

"Yes; I'd like to have ye do it, if ye can."

"Thank you, sir. I'll do my best."

Then the lad passed around the rooms, taking the hand of each defender in farewell until he reached Brenda. As he took her hand in his right and fondly lay his left upon it, the young girl broke into uncontrollable sobbing, and, throwing her disengaged arm over his shoulder, said:

"Oh, Henry! what a dear, brave boy you are! You never think of yourself, but always of your friends!"

"I will bring the soldiers, Brenda, and you shall all be saved. Keep up a good heart."

"But it is such a long ride, and even if you do get away, you may find us dead or captives when you return."

"You must be brave, Brenda—no, not brave, for you are that already; but be patient. We are sure to be here before those fellows can take the little fort. That can be defended as long as the ammunition holds out."

Then the boy kissed the pretty Brenda and her cousins, and dropped into the cellar. Passing into the earthwork, he selected his saddle and bridle from a heap of others, buckled on his spurs, dropped with bowed head upon his knees a moment, and crept into the passage leading to the spring. Groping his way between the narrow walls, he presently emerged through a natural crevice in a mass of bowlders near the spring. Standing in the screen of willows, he parted the branches cautiously in the direction of the two Indians, and saw them less than a hundred yards distant, standing with their backs towards him watching the Arnold house, the roof of which was now a roaring, leaping mass of flame.

Closing the boughs again, Henry opened them in an opposite direction and crept softly up to Chiquita, holding out his hand to her. The docile pony raised her head, and, coming forward, placed her nose in his palm, submitting to be saddled and bridled without objection or noise.

Leaping into the saddle, the boy drove his spurs into the animal's flanks, and was off at a furious run in the direction of Whipple. Startled by the hoof-beats, the Apaches looked back, and began running diagonally across the field to try to intercept the boy before he turned into the direct trail. Arrow after arrow flew after him, one wounding him in the neck and another in the cheek, and when the distance began to increase between him and his pursuers and they saw the boy was likely to get away, one raised his rifle and sent a bullet after him, which fractured the radius of his left arm.

"Well, Chiquita," said Henry, as he turned fairly into the Prescott trail and had realized the exact nature of his injuries, "you haven't got a scratch, and are good for this run if I can hold out."

It was dusk when Henry began his ride, and it

rapidly grew darker as he hurried along the trail. Neither he nor the pony had been over it before. Twice he got off the trail, and long and miserable stretches of time elapsed in regaining it; but the fort was reached at last and the alarm given.

PURSUIT OF THE APACHES

With twenty-eight men, including two scouts picked up as we passed through Prescott, and the post surgeon, I left for Skull Valley. The night was moonless, but the myriad stars shone brilliantly through the rarefied atmosphere of that Western region, lighting the trail and making it fairly easy to follow. It was a narrow pathway, with but few places where two horsemen could ride abreast, so conversation was almost impossible, and few words, except those of command, were spoken; nor were the men in a mood to talk. All were more or less excited and impatient, and, wherever the road would permit, urged their horses to a run.

The trail climbed and descended rugged steeps, crossed smooth intervals, skirted the edges of precipices, wound along borders of dry creeks, and threaded forests of pine and clumps of sage-

brush and greasewood. Throughout the ride the imaginations of officers and men were depicting the scenes they feared were being enacted in the valley, or which might take place should they fail to arrive in time to prevent.

It is needless to say, perhaps, that the one person about whom the thoughts of the men composing the rescuing party centred was the gentle, bright, and pretty Brenda. To think of her falling into the hands of the merciless Apaches was almost maddening.

On and on rode the column, the men giving their panting steeds no more rest than the nature of the road and the success of the expedition required. At last we reached the spur of the range behind which lay Skull Valley. We skirted it, and with anxious eyes sought through the darkness the place where the ranch buildings should be. All was silence. No report of firearms or whoop of savages disturbed the quiet of the valley.

Ascending a swell in the surface of the ground we saw that all the buildings had disappeared, nothing meeting our anxious gaze but beds of lurid coals, occasionally fanned into a red glow

by the intermittent night breeze. But there was the impregnable earthwork; the family must be in that. I dashed swiftly forward, eagerly followed by my men. The earthwork was destroyed, nothing but a circular pit remaining, in the bottom of which glowed the embers of the fallen roof-timbers.

A search for the slain was at once begun, and continued for a long time. Every square rod of the valley for a mile was hunted over without result, and we all gathered once more about the two cellars, in which the coals still glowed.

"It was in the cellar of the house that Sergeant Henry said the body of Mrs. Arnold was laid, was it not?" asked Dr. Coues.

"Yes," I replied.

"Then if all were killed after he left—shot from time to time—would not their remains be likely to be beside hers?"

"Not beside hers, I think. The last stand must have been made in the fort."

"Then the bodies, or what is left of them, must lie under that circular bed of coals, Duncan, if they died here."

"Probably, doctor. It's an uncanny thing to do, but we must stir the coals and see."

A thorough search revealed nothing.

"Does th' liftinint moind that Sargint Hinery mintioned a covered way that led from th' cellar to th' spring?" asked Private Tom Clary, who wielded a rail beside me. "Perhaps th' pretty lassie and her frinds are in that."

"That is so, Clary; thank you for the suggestion," I answered. "Can you make out the opening?"

"Nothin' sure, sor. Behoind thim wagon-tires there sames to be a natural slope of earth."

"Tip the tires over, Clary," I ordered; and presently a number of tires, from which the fire had burned the felloes, spokes, and hubs, fell into the coals, disclosing a recently filled aperture.

"Looks as if the end of a passage had been filled, doesn't it?" asked the surgeon.

"It certainly does," I answered. "Let us go to the spring and examine."

Accompanied by the doctor and several men, I rode to the spring. When we arrived there we broke a way through the thick-set willows into an irregular mass of small bowlders. Climb-

ing over these, we found ourselves at the mouth of a narrow passage about four feet high and two feet wide.

"This must be the entrance to the covered way," I remarked, and placing my head in the crevice, I called: "Oh, Mr. Arnold, we are here—your friends from Fort Whipple!"

"Thank Heaven!" in a man's tones, came clearly through the entrance, accompanied by a sudden outburst of sobs in girlish voices.

"We'll be there directly," spoke another man's voice—that of a stranger. "We've heard your horses' hoofs jarring the ground for some time, but we thought it safest to lay low until we were sure it wasn't redskins."

Then followed the sound of steps, accompanied by voices, sounding at the entrance, as a voice spoken in a long tube appears to be uttered at the listener's end. Some time elapsed before those who seemed so near appeared; but at last there emerged from the passage Mr. Arnold, two strange men, and three girls—but no Brenda.

"Where is Brenda, Mr. Arnold?" I asked.

"Heaven only knows, lieutenant. She gave herself up to the Apaches."

"Gave herself up to the Apaches! What do you mean?"

"That's precisely what she did, lieutenant," said one of the strangers, adding: "My name is Bartlett, from Hassayampa, and this is Mr. Gilbert, from Tucson. We were on our way from La Paz to Prescott and stopped here for a meal, and got corralled by the Indians. But about the girl Brenda: she took it into her head, after we got into the little fort, that unless some one could create a diversion to mislead the devils, we'd all lose our scalps."

"That beautiful young girl! Gave herself up to certain torture and death! Why did you allow it?"

"Allow it!" exclaimed Mr. Bartlett, indignantly. "I hope, lieutenant, you don't think so hard of me and my friend as to believe we'd have allowed it if we'd suspected what the plucky miss meant to do!"

"Tell me the circumstances, Mr. Bartlett," said I.

The party moved slowly along the path from the spring to the fires, and as they walked Mr. Arnold and the travellers gave an account of all

that had happened after Sergeant Henry left for Fort Whipple.

The burning arrows sent to the pitch-pine roof became so numerous that the besieged found it impossible to prevent the flames from catching in several places. Henry was hardly out of sight before the house became untenable, and the defenders were obliged to retire to the fort. When the house was consumed, and its timbers had fallen into the cellar a mass of burning brands, the space about the earthwork was clear, and the rifles at its loop-holes kept the Indians close within the out-building they had occupied since the attack began. No one dared to show himself to the unerring marksmen, who watched every movement.

For a long time silence reigned among the Indians. The whites, however, felt sure that plans were being matured which meant disaster to them.

At last these plans were revealed in a constant and rapid flight of arrows, directed at a point between two loop-holes—a point which could not be reached by the besieged, and where, if a considerable collection of burning brands could

be heaped against the logs, between the earth and the eaves, the pine walls and rafters must take fire. Walls and roof were too solid to be cut away, and water could not reach the outside.

The defenders, when they realized what the result of a fire would be, held a consultation, and decided that in the event of the fire getting control of the fort they should retire into the covered way, block up the entrance with earth, and remain there until help should arrive. It was thought the Indians would suppose all had perished in the flames.

"But they know we came here by an underground passage from the house," said Brenda; "will they not suspect we have entered another passage if we all disappear?"

"P'r'aps they may," answered Mr. Arnold; "I had not thought of that. We'll have to take our chances."

"If one of us was to appear to escape from here, and join them," continued the girl, "I think they would suppose the others had perished, and make no search."

"That may be true, but I'll take my chances here," said Mr. Gilbert.

"So will I," said his companion. "A fellow wouldn't last a minute outside this fort. I prefer smothering to the death those devils will give me."

It soon became evident to the besieged that the outer wall was on fire.

The sun had gone down and darkness was deepening in the valley when the first tongue of flame licked through a crevice in the roof and showed that the fire had gained a foothold. Soon a hole appeared, close to the eaves, which gradually enlarged towards the centre of the roof and along the surface of the earth. With blankets the fire was beaten out on the sides, but it crept insidiously along between the timber and earth covering.

In making the roof, branches of pine had been spread over the timber, and the branches in turn covered with a thick layer of straw to prevent the earth from filtering between the logs. This material was as dry as tinder, and held the fire.

The men stood at the loop-holes and compelled the savages to remain under cover of the outbuilding, while the four girls exerted themselves to keep the fire from showing inside. Delay

until help could arrive from Whipple was what all were struggling to gain; but the increasing heat and smoke showed the defenders at last that they could no longer put off retiring to the covered way.

The word was given and all entered it, and the men with shovels began to close the entrance. When it was a little more than half closed the hole in the roof had become triangular, resembling the space between two spokes and a felloe of a wheel. On the earth, or felloe side of the triangle, there was no fire; but the other sides were burning fiercely.

Making a sudden dash, and before any one could realize her intention, Brenda leaped past the shovellers, sprang over the embankment they were throwing up, and by the aid of a bench sprang up the four-foot wall, through the flame-bordered aperture, and disappeared, her clothing apparently in a blaze. The war-whoops immediately ceased.

No attempt at pursuit or rescue was made. The Arnolds and the strangers felt that it would be useless, and only result in the death of the pursuers. The work of closing the passage was

resumed and completed, and all sat down to await the slow flight of time and the possible arrival of the soldiers.

After listening to the story of the Arnolds I concluded that Brenda had fallen a victim to the cruelty of the Apaches, and that we should find her mutilated and disfigured body. A rapid and excited search was at once began. Far and wide, over plain, through ravines, and into the foot-hills rode the soldiers, leaving no part of the country for several miles around unsearched; but not a trace of the missing girl was discovered.

Once more the detachment gathered near the ruins of the Arnold home, and began preparations for returning to Whipple. The remains of the dead wife and mother were lifted from beneath the charred timbers and deposited in a grave near by. While the burial was taking place, the two scouts, Weaver and Cooler, were absent, looking for the Apache trail. Day was dawning, and as it was probable when they returned that the command could start, I ordered the horses fed from the loose forage scattered about, and the men to prepare their breakfast.

The scouts returned as the men were dispersing from their meal, and Cooler placed in my hand a dainty lock of flaxen hair, wound around the middle with a strand of the same.

"I found it," said the scout, "beside the ravine yonder, a little more than two miles from here. The young miss is alive, and dropped it for a 'sign.' The redskins all left in that direction."

Whatever Brenda's three cousins may have lacked in education and cultivation, they wanted nothing in affection. They gathered about the little tress, took it daintily in their palms, kissed it again and again, and moistened it with tears. Low sobs and endearing names for the brave darling who had been willing to sacrifice her life to preserve theirs fell from their lips. Poor, rude, frontier maids, they had shown an equal bravery all through the defence, and proved themselves to be worthy descendants of the race that lived through the colonial struggles with the Indians of the Mohawk Valley. The three girls gathered about me, and, clinging to my arms, besought me to go to the rescue of their cousin.

"Yes, yes, girls," I replied; "everything shall be done that possibly can be. We will start at once, and I hope to bring her back to you." Turning to the father, I said, "Mr. Arnold, I will leave you a luncheon for the road, and you must try to make the distance to Prescott on foot."

"Yes, sir; we can do it easy, thank you."

"I would leave you some of the men as escort, but in such an expedition I need more than I have."

"That's all right, Mr. Dunkin; 'f I had a beast I'd go with ye. There'll be no Apaches round these parts agin for a considerable spell," and his eyes ran sadly over the ruins of his home, the wreck of his property, resting finally on the grave of his wife.

Yes, Brenda was alive, and a prisoner of the Apaches, spared by them, probably, as children sometimes are after such raids, for adoption. It was plainly our duty to rescue her from the fate of a continued life with her captors.

XVIII

ON THE TRAIL OF THE APACHES

After a further delay, to allow the scouts and their broncos to breakfast, the party mounted and turned to the west. Calling Paul Weaver to ride by my side, I questioned him about the region before us.

"I suppose you are familiar with this part of the country, Paul?"

"Ought t' be. Trapped and hunted here since I was twenty, and I'm nigh on to sixty-five now."

"Have these Apaches a camping-place near here?"

"Yes; they spend a part of every year hereabouts, gatherin' mezcal. From the direction they've took, I b'lieve they're goin' to Santy Maree Creek."

"That flows into Bill Williams Fork, does it not?"

"Yes, an' 't has a northern and southern branch. One of th' favorite campin'-places of th' Mezcalleros 's on th' southern branch."

"How far is it from here?"

" 'Bout fifty mile."

"Easy of approach?"

"Toler'ble; good ridin' all th' way, 'cept a bit of bowlder country on a divide."

"Is the camp open to attack?"

"Wide open arter yer git into th' valley. There's a waterfall, or, rather, a piece of rips ther' that 'll drown th' n'ise of our comin'."

"Isn't it strange Indians should camp in such a place?"

"They're Mezcallero 'Paches, and the'r food, th' mezcal, grows thick round ther'. 'Sides, ther's no other place on th' stream combinin' grazin' and waterin', and they've never been hunted into that region yit."

"Well, Paul, they will be now."

I urged the men on as fast as possible, taking care not to exhaust the horses and unfit them for a long pursuit. The soldiers were animated by a strong desire to punish the Indians for their treatment of the family in Skull Valley, and

were excited by the fear that the gentle and beautiful young girl in their hands might fall a victim to some barbaric cruelty before they could be overtaken, so that the animals were constantly urged close to their powers of endurance.

Near the middle of the forenoon, as the soldiers were riding up a cañon, on each side of which rose rugged sandstone precipices, we came to a fork in the trail and the cañon. Not only the track parted, but, judging from footprints, most of the captured stock had passed to the right. Weaver said the right-hand path led to the northern branch of the Santa Maria, and the left to the southern.

I halted the detachment, perplexed. To divide my party of twenty-nine in order to follow both trails seemed to me to be inviting disaster. To take the whole number over a wrong trail and not rescue Brenda was a course to be dreaded. I called up the scouts, Weaver and Cooler, for a consultation.

"Don't you think it is probable," I asked, that a girl who was thoughtful enough to drop a 'sign' to show she is alive and a captive, would

be likely to give a hint here as to which trail she was taken over?"

"That's prob'ble, liftinint," replied Weaver. "'F you'll hold th' boys here a bit, George an' I'll ride up th' two trails a piece an' look for signs."

"Go quite a distance, too. She might not get an opportunity to drop anything for some time after leaving the fork."

"That's true, sir," said Cooler; "the redskins would naturally be watching her closely. Which way will you go, Paul?"

"Let the liftinint say," answered the elder scout, tightening his belt and readjusting his equipments for resuming his riding.

"All ready, then," said I. "You take the right, Weaver, and George the left. While you are gone we'll turn out the stock."

The scouts departed, and a few moments later the horses of the command were cropping the rich grass of the narrow valley, sentinels were placed to watch them and look for the return of the guides, and the rest of the men threw themselves upon the turf to rest.

An hour passed away, when Weaver was seen returning from the northern trail. As he ap-

proached he held something above his head. Directing the horses to be made ready, I walked forward to meet him, and received from his hand a small bow of blue ribbon, which I at once recognized to be the property of Brenda.

It now appeared certain the girl captive had been taken over the road to the right; so, without waiting for the return of Cooler, the men were ordered into their saddles, and we started along the northern trail. Our march had not long continued, however, when Private Tom Clary, who was riding in the rear, called to me. Looking back, I saw the young scout galloping rapidly forward and waving his hat in a beckoning manner.

A halt was ordered, and Cooler rode up to me and placed in my hand *a lock of flaxen hair, bound with a thread of the same.* Placed by the other they were twin tresses, except that the last was slightly singed by fire.

Well, tears glistened on the eyelids of some of the bronzed veterans at the sight of the tiny lock of hair. We had barely escaped taking the wrong trail.

"God bliss the darlint," said grizzled Tom

Clary. "There's not a ridskin can bate her with their tricks. We'll bring her back to her frinds, b'ys, or it 'll go hard wid us."

Clary's remarks were subscribed to by many hearty exclamations on the part of his fellow-soldiers. We had no difficulty in understanding that the Apaches had expected to be pursued and had dropped the ribbon to mislead us, and that Brenda had dropped her "sign" to set her friends right.

I asked the guides if it was not probable the Apaches had set a watch on the overlooking heights to see which road we should take at this point.

"It's sartin', liftinint," answered Weaver; "they're watchin' us sharp jest now."

"Then we had better continue on the northern trail awhile and mislead them, you think?"

"That's it, liftinint. That's th' best thing to do. We needn't reach their camp until after midnight, an' we might 's well spend th' time misleadin' em."

"Yes, and it 'll be better to reach them a few hours after midnight, too," added Cooler; "they sleep soundest then."

"Then we will go on as we began for some time longer," I replied, and the soldiers again moved at a brisk canter over the northern trail.

An hour passed, and a halt was made in a grassy nook, where the horses were turned out to graze until dusk. Our route was then retraced to the fork and the march resumed over the southern branch.

Night overtook us on a high ridge covered with loose, rounded bowlders, over which it was necessary to lead the horses slowly, with considerable clatter and some bruises to man and beast. The rough road lasted until a considerable descent was made on the western side, and ended on the edge of a grassy valley.

At this point Weaver advised that the horses should be left and the command proceed on foot; for if the Indians were in camp at the rapids it would be impossible to approach mounted without alarming them, while if on foot the noise of the rushing water would cover the sound of all movements.

Six men were sent back to a narrow defile to prevent the attacking party from being surprised by the detachment of Indians which had

taken the northern trail, should they intend to rejoin their friends at the rapids. Upon the recommendation of the scouts I determined to defer making an attack until after three o'clock, for they assured me that at that time the enemy would be feeling quite secure from pursuit and be in their deepest sleep.

The horses were picketed, guards posted, and a lunch distributed, and all not on duty lay down to wait. Time dragged slowly. About one o'clock a noise on the opposite side of the creek attracted attention, and Cooler crept away in the darkness to ascertain its cause. In half an hour he returned with the information that the party of Mezcalleros who had taken the northern trail had rejoined their friends and turned their animals into the general herd. Upon learning this I despatched a messenger to call in the six men sent to guard the defile.

When the time for starting arrived one man only was left with the picketed horses, and the rest of us slipped down the slope to the river-bottom, taking care not to rattle arms and equipments, and began a slow advance along a narrow

pathway, the borders of which were lined with the spiked vegetation of the country.

Moving on for some time, I judged from the sound of flowing water that we were nearing the camp, and, halting the party, sent the scouts to reconnoitre. They returned with the information that the camp was close at hand, and contained thirteen mat and skin covered tents, or huts, and that the stolen stock and Indian ponies were grazing on a flat just beyond. No guards were visible.

The flat about the encampment was covered with Spanish-bayonet, soapweed, and cacti, with here and there a variety of palmetto, which attains a height of about twenty-five feet, the trunks shaggy with a fringe of dead spines left by each year's growth. Cooler suggested that at a given signal the trunks of two of these trees should be set on fire to light up the camp, and enable the soldiers to pick off the Apaches as they left their shelter when our attack should begin. He also proposed that we yell, saying: "If you out-yell 'em, lieutenant, you can out-fight 'em."

Although I seriously doubted whether twenty-five white throats could make as much noise as

half a dozen red ones, I consented to the proposition. I sent nine men to the flat upon which the ponies and cattle were grazing, with orders to place themselves between the creek and herd, and when the firing began drive the animals into the hills.

When these instructions had been given, Surgeon Coues asked me if the firing would be directed into the tents.

"Yes, doctor," I replied.

"Of course, Miss Brenda is in one of them," he observed.

"Yes, and if we shoot into them indiscriminately we are quite as likely to hit her as any one."

"Can you think of any way of locating her?"

"No; I am at a dead loss. We will try Cooler's plan of yelling, and perhaps that will bring the Indians out."

I sent Clary, who had been directed to remain near me, for Sergeant Rafferty, and when the sergeant appeared directed him to forbid any one to fire a shot until ordered to do so.

XIX

THE ATTACK ON THE APACHE CAMP

ORDERS were passed and dispositions so made that one-half the force was placed on each flank of the camp. All movements were made at a considerable distance from the place to be attacked, and the utmost care taken not to make a sound that would alarm the sleeping foe. Once on the flanks, the men were to creep up slowly and stealthily to effective rifle range. When the trunks of the palmettos were lighted all were to yell as diabolically as possible, and fire at every Indian that showed himself.

The front of the camp looked towards the creek, which flowed over bowlders and pebbles with a great rush and roar. The Indians were expected in their flight to make a dash for the stream, and attempt to pass through the shoal rapids to the wooded bluffs beyond. My instructions were for the men to screen themselves on

the flanks, behind the yuccas, Spanish-bayonet, emole, and cacti. Accompanied by Tom Clary and Paul Weaver, I selected a clump of vegetation on the northern side, from which the front of the tents could be observed. Sergeant Rafferty, with George Cooler, was on the opposite flank, and the lighting of a tree on my side was to be the signal for one to be lighted on the other, and for the yelling to begin.

This plan was carried out. The flash of one match was followed promptly by the flash of another. Two flames burst forth, and rapidly climbed the shaggy trunks of the little palms, lighting up the whole locality. At the same instant an imitation war-whoop burst from vigorous lungs and throats.

Every one held his rifle in readiness to shoot the escaping Apaches, but not a redskin showed his jetty head. The soldiers yelled and yelled, practising every variation ingenuity could invent in the vain attempt to make their tame white-man utterances resemble the blood-curdling, hair-raising, heart-jumping shrieks of their Indian foes, now so strangely silent. Not a savage responded vocally or otherwise.

But for the presence of the captive girl in one of the thirteen tents the attack would have begun by riddling the thinly covered shelters with bullets at low range.

The two burning trees had gone out and two others had been lighted, and it soon appeared evident that if something was not done to bring out the foe the supply of torches would soon be exhausted and nothing accomplished. In the darkness the advantage might even turn to the side of the redman.

Surgeon Coues, who reclined near me, asked: "Do you think any of those fellows understand English?"

"Perhaps a few common phrases. They know Spanish fairly well from living for some centuries near the Mexicans."

"Are they quite as old as that, lieutenant?"

"You know what I mean, doctor."

"Why not speak to Brenda in English, and ask her to try to show us where she is? The Apaches will not understand—will think you are talking to your men."

"An excellent idea, doctor. I'll try it."

Private Tom Clary was sent along both flanks

with orders for all yelling to cease and for perfect quiet to be maintained. Then, acting upon the surgeon's suggestion, I called, in a clear, loud voice:

"Brenda, we are here—your friends from the fort. Your relatives are safe. Try to make a signal, or do something by which we can learn where you are. Take plenty of time, and do nothing to endanger your life."

A long silence ensued, during which two more pillars of fire burned out. I was beginning to fear I should be obliged to offer terms to the Indians, leaving them unhurt if they would yield up their captive and the stolen stock; but before I had fully considered this alternative Clary, who was returning along the rear of the line of tents from his recent errand, approached and said: "Liftinint, as I was crapin' along behoind th' wiggies I saw somethin' loike a purty white hand stickin' out from undher th' edge of th' third from this ind."

"Show it to me," said I. "I'll go with you."

Making a slight détour to the rear, the soldier and I crept up to the back of the tent indicated, pausing at a distance of twenty feet from it.

Nothing definite could be made out in the darkness. A narrow, white object was visible beneath the lower edge. Sending Clary back a few yards to light up a palm, I fixed my eyes on the object mentioned, and as the flames leaped up the trunk perceived by the flaring light a small, white hand, holding in its fingers the loose tresses of Brenda's hair. The question was settled. The captive girl was in the third tent from the right of the line.

Waiting until the fire went out, Clary and I made our way back to our former station.

"Go around the lines again, Clary, and tell Sergeant Rafferty to move his men to a point from which he can cover the rear of the camp, and open fire on all the tents except the third from the right."

"All roight, sor; th' b'ys 'll soon mak' it loively for th' rids."

"Tell the sergeant to light up some trees."

"Yes, sor."

I then crept slowly back to my own flank, and ordered a disposition of my half of the party so as to command the space in front of the line of tents. In another instant the flames were as-

ending two tree-trunks, and the rapid cracking of rifles broke our long reserve. With the first scream of a bullet through their flimsy shelters the Indians leaped out and ran for the river. Few fell. Rapid zigzags and the swinging of blankets and arms as they ran confused the aim of the soldiers. In less than five minutes the last Apache was out of sight, and the firing had ceased.

We dashed up to the tents, and I rushed to the one from which I had seen the hand and tress thrust out, and called, "Brenda!" There was no response or sound. Looking into the entrance, I saw in the dim light of the awakening day the figure of a girl lying on her back, her feet extended towards me, and her head touching the rear wall. The right arm lay along her side, and the left was thrown above her head, the fingers still holding her hair.

A terrible fear seized my heart. I again called the girl by her name, but received no answer. I went in, and with nervous fingers lighted a match and stooped beside her. Horror-stricken, I saw a stream of blood threading its way across the earthern floor from her left side. I shouted

for Dr. Coues, and the surgeon hurried in. From his instrument-case he took a small, portable lamp, and, lighting it, fell upon his knees beside the prostrate girl.

During the following few moments, while the skilled fingers of the firm-nerved surgeon were cutting away clothing to expose the nature of the wound, my thoughts found time to wander to the distant family, on its way to the fort, and to the boy sergeants there. I thought what a sad message it would be my province to bear to them, should this dear relative and cherished friend die by savage hands.

There was little hope that the pretty girl could live. To me she seemed already claimed by death. She who had made our long and weary march from Wingate to Whipple so pleasant by her vivacity and intelligence, and had latterly brightened our occasional visits to Skull Valley, was to die in this wretched hole.

But the *tactus eruditus* of the young surgeon was continuing the search for some evidence that the savage stab was not fatal, and his mind was busy with means for preserving life, should there be a chance. I watched his motions, and assisted

now and then when asked, and waited with strained patience for a word upon which to base a hope.

At last the surgeon gently dropped the hand whose pulse he had long been examining, and said: "She is alive, and that is about all that can be said. You see, her hands, arms, and neck are badly scorched by the dash she made through the fire at the ranch. Then this wicked knife-thrust has paralyzed her. She has bled considerably, too, but she lives. Press your finger upon this artery—here."

"Can she be made to live, doctor?"

"The knife has not touched a vital part, but it may have done irreparable injury. I can tell more presently."

Nothing more was said, except in the way of direction, for some time, the surgeon working slowly and skilfully at the wound. At last, rearranging the girl's clothing and replacing his instruments in their case, he said: "If I had the girl in the post-hospital, or in a civilized dwelling, with a good nurse, I think she might recover."

"Can't we give her the proper attendance here, doctor?" I asked.

"I fear not. She ought to have a woman's gentle care, for one thing, and some remedies and appliances I haven't with me for such a delicate case. It is the long distance between here and the fort, and the rough road, that make the outlook hopeless. She cannot survive such a journey."

"Then we will remain here, doctor," said I. "Write out a list of what you want, and I will send a man to Whipple for tents and supplies, a camp woman, Frank, Vic, and the elder Arnold girl."

"Duncan, you are inspired!" exclaimed the doctor. "I'll have my order ready by the time the messenger reports, and then we'll make Brenda comfortable."

A letter was written to Captain Bayard, the surgeon's memoranda enclosed, and a quarter of an hour afterwards fleet-footed Sancho was flying over the sixty miles to Fort Whipple as fast as Private Tom Clary could ride him. Three days later a pack-train arrived, with a laundress from the infantry company, Frank Burton, and Mary Arnold, and with stores and supplies necessary for setting up a sick-camp. The wounded girl mended rapidly from the start.

In due time Brenda recovered sufficiently to bear transportation to Prescott, where she joined her uncle and cousins. Rapid changes quickly followed. I received orders directing me to report for duty at once at the Seabury Military School, and by the same mail came letters from Colonel Burton directing his sons to accompany me. At the end of the next fortnight, just as we were packed for a journey to the Pacific coast, Brenda received instructions from her maternal relatives to make the same journey, and joined us.

Frank and Henry's project to transport their ponies East, and their plans for Manuel and Sapoya, were also carried out. Boys and ponies became a prominent contingent to the corps of cadets under my military instruction during the following three years.

Later, Henry went to West Point and became an officer of the army. Frank and Manuel went to college, the former becoming a distinguished civil engineer and the latter a prominent business man. Sapoya closed his school career at Seabury, and rejoined his people in the Indian Territory, becoming a valued and respected leader of his people.

On a beautiful lawn before a fine mansion on the eastern shore of the Hudson River, beneath the shade of a stately elm, stands a small monument, upon the top of which rests a finely chiselled model of a setter dog. Beneath, on a bronze tablet, is engraved:

"Beneath this stone lies Victoriana, the loved and esteemed friend of
Charles Alfred Duncan,
Frank Douglas Burton,
Brenda Arnold Burton,
Henry Francis Burton,
Manuel Augustine Perea y Luna,
Sapoya Snoygon Perea."

THE END